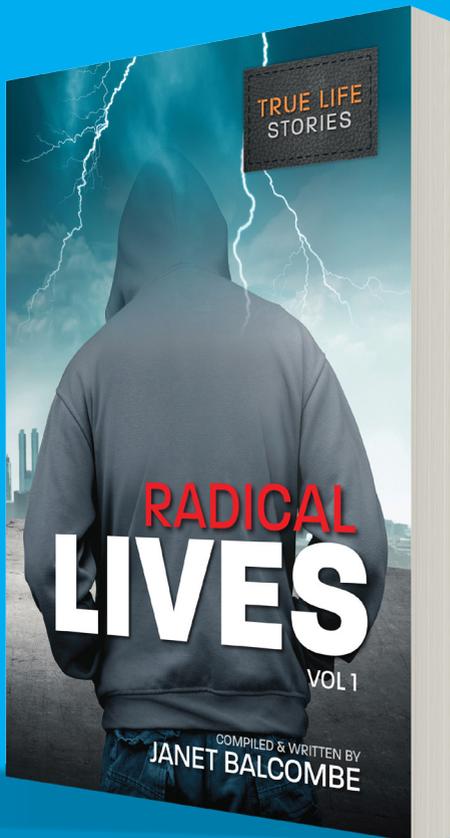


JUNE - JULY 2017

THE CHRISTIAN writer



BOOK REVIEW

Radical Lives VOL 1
BY JANET BALCOMBE

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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Book Review Requests: (members only)

Post a copy of your book to Julia Martin

286 Karapiro Road, RD4, Cambridge 3496

(Your book will be added as a donation to NZCW's 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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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 seminars 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

Our Retreat 2017 was an enjoyable fun time together with 28 of our writers hosted at Flaxmill Retreat Centre, near Whitianga on the Coromandel. The vision was to create a world-class retreat experience inspired by the classic adage 'a rising tide lifts all boats', where collectively all improve together on their writing journeys. We were inspired by evangelist and author Kaylene Subritzky, professional editor and social media expert Iola Goulton, best-selling international author and multi-award-winning speaker Tom O'Neil, plus award-winning blogger and professional writer on gardening Sarah O'Neil. All speakers brought a unique message to our writers, many highlights of which are featured in this edition of *The Christian Writer*. Our committee received remarkable feedback from this Retreat which included fantastic accommodation, food and speakers. We do hope you can join us at our Retreat 2019.

The Christian Writer is now a publication member of ARPA (Australasian Religious Press Association), a Christian communications network with hundreds of members throughout Australasia. Their 43rd annual Conference theme is *Connections + Community*, and will be hosted at Rydges Hotel, Auckland on August 25th-27th, 2017. The conference

will enable editors, journalists and writers to connect together for inspiration, professional development and upskilling. Keynote speakers include John Fabrin, Lisa Woolley, Mai Chen, Keitha Smith and myself. For those NZCW members who are interested in attending, please visit: www.arpa.news/conference/.

During the last few months we have experienced a significant boost in members for NZ Christian Writers. This is thanks in part to our most prolific Christian author and publisher, George Bryant, who has been hosting writing seminars endorsed by NZ Christian Writers. At these seminars, he shares the importance and power of writing from a Christian worldview, and gives a FREE copy of *My Writing Journey* which includes 38 tips to encourage and equip you on your writing journey. Collectively our growth goal for NZ Christian Writers is to have 200+ members by the end of 2017. To achieve this, we are encouraging all members to reach out to friends, family, and people in church and the community to learn more about us. Simply encourage them to join NZ Christian Writers via our website: www.NZChristianWriters.org.

Blessings,

Justin St Vincent



May 2017 Retreat at Flaxmill

an unforgettable experience

Report by Debbie McDermott

Of all the retreats I have attended since joining NZ Christian Writers, this one held at the lovely Flaxmill Retreat Centre tops them all. While \$100 per day may be more than what we've paid for other retreats, the outstanding accommodation, speakers, meals, facilities and location were worth every cent spent—especially when one considers we did not need to subsidise catering, bring our own bedding, towels or soaps, or do kitchen duties like we have in the past. This meant everyone attending the retreat could simply sit back, relax and enjoy everything that was offered—which, of course, is the primary objective of any retreat.



Accommodation for 6 (1 master bedroom, 2 twin rooms & all the mod cons)

After being welcomed by Justin St Vincent, we were treated to a scrumptious evening meal. It was fun listening to the bubbling chatter as members from all around the country caught up on each other's latest news while they dined. Quite a few new members had come to the retreat too, and it was good getting to know them.

The rest of our first evening was spent in playing board games, watching the highly-rated movie *The Book Thief*, and finally snuggling down into a warm, cosy bed.

Day #2: Friday

After beginning the day with a hearty breakfast and a devotional prepared and delivered by Debbie McDermott, Justin invited our first keynote speaker, Sarah O'Neil, to share with us her

Publishing Journey



Sarah with her 3 published books on display
www.sarahthegardener.co.nz/

Sarah did not imagine that moving from Auckland City to a lifestyle block in Aka Aka would be the start of a journey to publishing three books on gardening, about which she knew little. She was determined to learn, however, and finally bought herself a Yates Garden Guide after losing her crops to the rain that sometimes swamps Aka Aka's low-lying land. She discovered raised garden beds were the answer (and now has 36 of them!).

Shortly after modifying her garden, Sarah entered a Yates Gardening Challenge that involved writing and uploading a daily blog, with photos, to the Yates site for three months. Although she didn't get enough votes to win 1st, 2nd or 3rd prize, it was a life-changing experience for Sarah. Not only did she enjoy blogging every day, she discovered she could do it well too. A few months later, Yates launched a second Challenge which Sarah entered and won.

After competing in a third Yates challenge, Sarah's passion for writing grew and she created a WordPress webpage as an outlet for her talent. The online friends she'd made during the Yates challenges continued following her on her own site, and it was not long before her blog was attracting interest from people worldwide.

It was at this point that Sarah's husband, Tom, negotiated a strategic publishing deal, sponsored by Yates, for Sarah's first book *The Good Life*. With only an 88-day deadline, Sarah had to work hard to reduce her blogs from a total of 130,000 words to 80,000 (which also included new content), but she managed! In her own words: "God doesn't give you more than you can handle." Due to the success of *The Good Life* and Sarah's ongoing support of Yates, she now runs the Yates competitions for aspiring gardeners.

Sarah's second book, *Play in the Garden*, came about in a way that only God could have planned. New Holland publishers approached her with a request to write a book on gardening for children. She agreed and involved her two boys, Tim and Joey, in creating this delightful book.

Following the publication of *Play in the Garden*, Sarah persuaded New Holland to contract her to write her third book, *Growing Vegetables: An Easy Guide for All Seasons*. Of the three books she's had published, Sarah says this is the one she enjoyed writing the most.

Sarah admits that getting published is seldom as easy as it has been for her. Three tips she gave that may help are:

- Have a solid foundation of knowledge about what you are writing so you can move forward.
- Be passionate about your topic.
- Shamelessly promote yourself to your potential market.



Flaxmill's Dining Room

After morning tea, Sarah launched into the second half of her talk, entitled:

Tips for Surviving the Publishing Process

Contracts

Publishing contracts are legally binding. It is therefore vital to take note of:

- Dates and deadlines.
- The required number of words.
- Any costs involved. Advances from publishers are rare.
- Negotiable areas such as movie rights.

Formatting

A plain, single spaced Word document will keep your editor happy. Clarify where you want any pictures and tables to go.

Editing

The role of an editor is to fix grammar, not alter the tone and context of your words. Make sure your book still says what you want it to say before it goes to print.

Design

If you don't like what the designer has produced say so.

The Long Wait

After months of frantic writing and editing, there is this strange lull. Meanwhile the publishers are working on the proofs of your manuscript before sending it for printing. All you can do now is wait.

Publication

As the release date looms, the publisher will send you an important document asking you to supply details of who you know in the media and your sphere of influence. The information you give will affect the kind of publicity your book gets.

Book Launches and Tours

While most publishers will print marketing material free of charge, few will organise a book launch or tour, so be prepared to do your own. Your local bookstore may help.

Publicity

If you are allocated a publicist, they will spend a month prior to your book launch in hooking you up with as many media opportunities as possible. After that, you must take control of your own publicity.

Create your own Marketing Strategy

Ensure your book can be easily found by potential readers. Communicate via your social media sites. Provide links to where your book can be purchased. Create an Amazon.com profile. Above all remember:

- A book won't make you rich and famous—you will.
- A book is what you make it.
- The more you put into promoting your book, the more you will get out of it.
- Being an author only starts with writing a book.



In the conference room

Our second speaker of the day was Tom O'Neil. His key topic was:

7 Keys to Successful Personal Branding



Tom O'Neil
www.tomoneil.com

Tom began his talk by saying God wants us to be influencers in the world (Matthew 5:14-16). To do that, we need to first pray and seek God's will (Psalm 32:8). Tom then shared some of his own amazing journey to success, after which he gave us the following seven keys to help us achieve our goals too.

1. You are a brand

- Become a celebrity in your space, a brand ambassador for Jesus Christ.
- What brand can you create over the next five years?
- What do you want your personal brand to be known for in 2025?

2. Define your authority

Know (and sell) the achievements that highlight and give you authority to leverage your brand. These achievements may include:

- Media exposure
- Positive reviews
- Reader commendations
- Representation on committees
- Leading or taking part in projects
- Special appearances at literary festivals etc.

3. Make social media your mega-phone

- Choose one that is authentic to you and work it.
- It is better to be good at one social media site than useless across six.

4. Master print, radio and TV media

- Just ASK! According to Wayne Gretzky, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take!"
- When being interviewed by the media, focus on three main points.
- Speak in sound bites.
- Transition up the media chain; i.e. from local to regional radio to TV.

5. You Choose You

- God has given me a voice to speak out, but only I can choose to do it.
- Writers and speakers BECOME influencers by default.
- Writers are also speakers. Perhaps join Toastmasters to improve in this area.
- To quote Woody Allen: '80% of success in life is showing up.'

6. Off and Online Branding

- As Justin St Vincent so rightly says, "You are your own broadcasting tower." What am I broadcasting?
- We need to audit our brand to make sure we are as right online as we are in day to day life.
- Does my email address or voice mail need to be changed to reflect this?

7. Play the long game

- Brand development takes time. An 'overnight' success is often many years in the making.
- Ensure every message points to where you want to be in 2025!
- Remember that God wants us to be influencers in our world.

After Tom's inspiring talk, we had the rest of the afternoon free until dinnertime and after-dinner board games.

Day #3: Saturday

We once again began the day with a devotional and breakfast, then regrouped in the conference room to listen to our third speaker, Kaylene Subritzky, who spoke about her publishing journey for

God Has a Plan



Kaylene Subritzky
www.doveministries.com

After telling us some of her life story and how God inspired her to write *God Has a Plan*, Kaylene said writers need to keep in mind the following:

Who are we writing for? Who are we writing to?

This is about reaching your target market. Have a clear picture of the person who typifies the market you want to speak to. Whoever it is, that person must readily come to mind when you are thinking about your market.

Will your writing touch that market?

Almost every word you write must go through this litmus test. Your outlines and chapter headings need to get this content right at an early stage in order to set the scene for building the depth of your work.

Developing depth in our writing

Depth can be measured by the answer to this question: Can readers relate to what the book is saying? Kaylene listed three ways on how to write with depth:

1. Show vulnerability

Showing vulnerability enables you to engage with your readers. It also helps them to engage with their own pain.

2. Provide a positive answer

It is vital to give your reader a positive answer to how to make these painful things work for them; to point them to the only answer—Christ Jesus!

3. Give hope for the future

When you become real to your reader, your story could be their story. Their circumstances may differ but they can relate to your pain and connect to their own pain. They are also more open to believing you when you say there is hope in Jesus Christ.

Above all else, allow the Holy Ghost Writer to lead and guide your writing.



Kaylene with Justin and the picture of her book *God Has a Plan* on the screen

After tea, Kaylene spoke on the topic of

Writing as an Evangelistic Tool

Some of the practicalities involved in reaching your target market include:

1. Committing it to prayer

It is important to remind yourself that this is not about you. It is about what the Lord wants to come through you. You must pray and seek guidance and direction from Him at every stage to ensure the plan you have is the plan God had first.

2. Is it a dream or is it your destiny?

A goal is a dream with a deadline. If you have a dream about writing a book, put a date on it. When you establish a deadline, you are not just playing around with an idea. You are turning your dream into a reality.

3. First steps

It is better to start than just stare at a blank piece of paper. So how do you capture the story?

4. Getting the story down

Kaylene gave some pointers based on her own writing journey:

- Determine the rough outline and chapter headings of your book.
- Working on one chapter or section at a time, use a digital recorder to verbally record what you want to put into that part of your book.
- Take a transcript of what you have recorded and edit it.

Kaylene said working on individual sections of her book at a time helped her see how they would flow together. It also enabled her to identify gaps and areas where she could add value.

When your book is finally published, pray that the Lord will use every single copy to accomplish what He has purposed.

After Kaylene's second session, we were once again treated to a delicious lunch and a bit of leisure time.



Debbie, Jeanette, Joan & Janet playing a speedy version of Scrabble

The second speaker of the day was Iola Goulton, a professional writer and editor with specialised skills in using web and social media platforms as publishing and marketing tools. Her topic was on:

Building Your Author Platform



Iola Goulton
www.christianediting.co.nz

The Marketing Mix comprises:

Product	Place
Package	Platform
Price	Promotion

To market our product, we need to get the basics right. This includes writing well and doing our passive marketing correctly.

Components of an Author Platform

These include:

Website	} Passive Marketing (with active elements)
Email List	
Newsletter	
Social Media	

The purpose of an author platform is to:

- Support your sales funnel.
- Attract and convert potential customers into actual customers.

Brand before platform

- Brand drives platform decisions.
- Brand is presenting the professional and polished version of ourselves. This is especially important on social media.
- Brand is delivering on our promises.
- While brand is unique to you, it should be consistent with the genre and target reader.

Visual Branding—the look, feel and tone of your platform

Good branding lets readers know if you are someone they want to connect with. Building a brand that attracts your target audience includes:

- Website platform and design
- Font and colour choice
- Author photo and biography
- Image choice

Website Must-Haves

- A theme
- Website security
- Website analytics
- An SEO assistant
- Email signup forms
- Social follow and share buttons

Blogging

The purpose of blogging is to attract your target readers. Pick 4-5 core topics that are relevant to your readers and blog on each once a month. When blogging, the following points are vital:

- Use good Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) Practices
- Design must include:
 - A strong headline
 - A co-schedule headline analyser
 - A Google keyword planner
 - Yoast SEO or similar plugin
 - Internal and external links
 - Images
- Writing should have:
 - A minimum of 300 words
 - Keywords
 - Subheadings
 - Short sentences
 - Short paragraphs
 - Bullets and lists

Newsletters and Email Lists

The objective of newsletters and email lists is to move your subscribers through the sales funnel. Lola gave numerous insights on how to do this and further details can be obtained directly from her at www.christianediting.co.nz.

Using Social Media as an Author

Social media (SM) are computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. They are also the beginning of your sales funnel.

Social media should focus on the earlier stages of the funnel, such as attracting potential customers, not on the sell-sell-sell that makes up many SM streams.

Social media plan

- Identify your target reader.
- Decide on which social media networks you are going to share. e.g:
 - Major networks: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest and Instagram.
 - Secondary networks: Retail Sites, Promotion Sites, LinkedIn, Medium, Tumblr and WattPad.
 - Video-based networks: Facebook Live, Instagram Stories, Periscope, Snapchat and YouTube.
 - Reader Sites: Goodreads, Library Thing, BookLikes, Litsy and Riffle.
- Decide what to share. It should be of interest to your target readers. Use Research Hashtags and keywords.
- Decide when and how often to share.
 - Facebook—two posts per day
 - Twitter—five posts per day
 - Pinterest—five pins per day
 - Instagram—one or two posts a day
- Use a tool like Buffer to suggest optimal posting times.

Daily Plan

- Write!
- Review main social media networks (including blogs).
- Respond to comments and mentions.
- Comment, retweet and share via Buffer/Hootsuite.
- Review Feedly.

After Lola's very informative talk, those participating in the after-dinner concert went off to practice while the rest of us indulged in some leisure time.

The Concert

The Saturday evening concert was a great success and we were greatly entertained by two amusing 'guess who' performances from our president, several song items and poetry readings, and even a couple of violin solos. All the performers made a great effort and I wish there was room in the magazine to include all the photos we took. Below are three which capture the essence of the evening.



Joan Bryant



Rosie Boom



Justin St Vincent

Day #4—Sunday

The last day of our biannual retreat is always bittersweet, especially for those who only get to catch up with old friends once every two years. However, it is also a very precious day because we hold a church service. This year, it was facilitated by Mike and Janet Fleming and it was wonderful seeing NZCW members from different churches and denominations worshipping and praising God together. This invariably brings a focus to what our mission as Christian writers is.



Worshipping the Lord together

After the church service and a coffee break, some of the committee members sat on a panel to answer or field any questions members had, and to discuss ways in which to improve what New Zealand Christian Writers provides.

This was followed by a hearty lunch, after which we said our farewells until next time.

In closing, I want to reiterate that this retreat at Flaxmill is the best I've been to. Not only was it good value for money, it was also greatly inspiring and held in one of the best locations in New Zealand. The vision of the committee is to make our next biannual retreat in 2019 even better than this one. I therefore really encourage you to do what one of our members does—begin saving up for it now! Putting aside as little as \$10 a week adds up to \$520 a year, which is easily achievable when you think about it.

Fabulous Flaxmill

By Eion Field

Way up on Coromandel
Is a little place called Flaxmill
Where accommodation's neat,
A great place for retreat.
NZ Christian Writers
(Bunch of lucky blighters)
Three days in this resort
We're rested, fed and taught.

The fellowship was great
(Though yours truly got there late)
Wild laughter and good fun
Made up for lack of sun
Our meals were sheer delight
Breakfast, noon and night
There were tea and coffee breaks
With bikkies, buns and cakes.

Fine people led each session
And brought a special blessing.
That concert which we had
Was rated "not too bad"
All items in the room
Went with a bang (or Boom!)

In the Sunday morning service
The preacher wasn't nervous,
For one and all alike
Mike didn't need a mic.

The retreat was so well done,
Nice work, everyone!
I'm really glad I went
A restful time well spent
Great friendships still remain
So let's do it all again!

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"/> Full Membership \$40	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Membership \$20
	B:	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Membership \$55	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Membership \$35

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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GET CREATIVE

Unfortunately, nobody submitted a Get Creative submission for this issue of the magazine—which was disappointing. Do remember that the purpose of Get Creative is to give you the opportunity to creatively use your talent and your preferred genre to write about the specified topic. If your submission is published, you also get the chance of setting your own topic, which is a great advantage—especially if your topic is something you particularly want to write about, or have already written about.

The next topic will be

It will be awesome 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 if you wish.

Deadline: 10th July 2017

Email submissions to
sddp@xtra.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
p 09 281 4896 or email
advertise@initiatemedia.net
Check out www.initiatemedia.net

WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian writing of
today and yesteryear—

by Frederick Swallow

Wide Outreach of



Emmaus Bible Correspondence School was first developed by Dr RE Harlow and others in 1942 in Canada. Emmaus now send 1.3 million courses a year to some 100 countries, including New Zealand, in over 80 languages—digitally, by mail or other formats.

Lessons are evangelical and educational, geared as learning tools for adults, children and home groups, with or without church links.

These Emmaus courses are sent to every Correction Centre in New Zealand. One inmate writes: "I read the Bible but don't understand it. I now have a base [Emmaus] to start."

Seminar for Christian Writers with George Bryant Report by Janice Gillgren

On April 8th 2017, Northland Christian Writers (NCW) was delighted to host George Bryant in Whangarei for one of his national seminars about writing from a Christian worldview.

As George was one of the founding members of NCW (which started in 1989), and lived and worked in Whangarei for some years around that period, many people knew him already, and some visitors to the seminar were early acquaintances.

A total of 21 people attended. The rest were visitors or new contacts, which meant that about half weren't regular members. Some of the visitors have shown interest in joining us as a result of the seminar, which is exciting.

George gave a copy of his book ('My Writing Journey'), plus notes related to his topic, to everyone who attended. His 'hot tips' generated a lot of discussion, as did his information about Daystar Publishing.

A few tips about writing books for publication were:

- 1) Get other people to read your writing.
- 2) Tidy it up as much as you can by yourself.
- 3) Send it to a professional editor. The cost is worth it.

Comments about his seminar have all been positive.

Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Geraldine Crow

Whangarei

Gabrielle Irvine

Orewa, Auckland

Steve Shephard

Te Awamutu

Russell Smith

Takaka

Bob Wickham

Opotiki

REMEMBER

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

Need Professional Writing Services?

These New Zealand Christian Writer
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One Day at a Time

By Janet Fleming

Probably the expression my mother-in-law uses the most would be 'One Day at a Time' and I guess when you are almost 102 years old, those words are so true. For her, each day brings its special challenges and tomorrow may never come.

And yet those words apply to each of us, for none of us has the guarantee of tomorrow.

The Rich Fool planned to make more money but God called him a fool because that night he would die.

Jesus said, "Don't worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough troubles of its own."

Another expression my mother-in-law often uses is 'This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.' Today is the only day I have. Let me use this one day in time to bring glory to my wonderful Saviour.

I only have today
if Jesus I'd be choosing,
Tomorrow may be just too late
my talents to be using;
I only have today
those wrongs to be forgiving,
It's best that I decide right now
this one day to be living;
I only have today
to help and bless a toiling brother,
No better time than now
to lift the burden of another;
May I decide to take this day,
the day that God has given,
To help another pilgrim find
the road that leads to heaven.

Remember each of us only has 'One Day at a Time'.

Literary Devices

Flash-Forward

Definition of Flash-Forward

Flash-forward or prolepsis is a literary device in which the plot goes ahead of time i.e. a scene that interrupts and takes the narrative forward in time from the current time in a story.

Generally, a flash-forward represents expected or imagined events in the future interjected in the main plot revealing the important parts of the story that are yet to occur. It is an opposite of flashback or analepsis (reveals past events).

The difference between Flash-Forward and Foreshadowing

Flash-forward is similar to foreshadowing. However, foreshadowing hints at the possible outcome in future without any interruption and using events or dialogues of characters in the current time. It may also be present in the titles of narratives or chapter titles. Flash-forward, on the other hand, is an interjected scene in a narrative that takes the narrative forward in time. The events presented in a flash-forward are bound to happen in the story. Foreshadowing predicts the future events, but the events do not necessarily take place in the future—as in 'red-herring'.

Two Flash-Forward Examples in Literature

Example #1

Flash-forward is essentially a postmodern narrative device but there are a few flash-forward examples in early literature.

Charles Dickens' *Christmas Carol* depicts Scrooge in a flash-forward. The tight-fisted and ill-tempered Scrooge is visited by the 'Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come' who shows him his future. Scrooge sees himself dead and people finding comfort

and happiness in his death. No one mourns his death and the people he ruined in his life stole his wealth. He sees Mrs Dilber, his housekeeper, selling his property to junkmen and friends. The only one touched by his death is a young and poor couple. His only legacy is a cheap tombstone in a graveyard. He weeps on his own grave and asks the third ghost of Christmas to give him a chance to change himself. He wakes up and finds that he is back on the Christmas morning of the present. Scrooge repents and becomes kind and generous.

Example #2

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie by Muriel Spark makes extensive use of the narrative technique of flash-forward. The story takes place at Marcia Blaine School where six girls are handed over to Miss Brodie.

In the very beginning of the novel, Spark tells us that Miss Brodie is betrayed. She then gradually reveals the betrayer and, finally, reveals all the details related to the event. Similarly, she introduces 'Joyce Emily' as the rejected girl from the 'Brodie set' and later tells us the reasons.

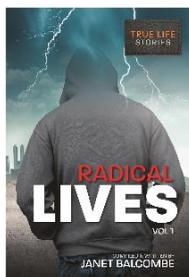
Function of Flash-Forward

Flash-forward enables a writer to give logical explanations to the actions of the characters in a narrative. The character's actions make more sense to the readers—after having developed a greater understanding of the character and character's personality.

Moreover, flash-forward grabs the readers' interest in the current events of the narrative to see how the story develops towards the future that has already been shown to them.

For more information on literary devices, and to read the full article of Flash-Forward visit <http://literarydevices.net>

Featured Book Review



Radical Lives

Volume 1

By Janet Balcombe

Review by Julia Martin

Radical Lives is a compilation of 15 dramatic true-life stories Janet originally wrote as articles for *Christian Life News Magazine*. From her own experience of a life without God, she can understand the miraculous and radical transformation that takes place when a person surrenders to God and is freed by the saving grace and power of Jesus Christ.

The stories profile former criminals, drug addicts, dealers, alcoholics, terrorists, gang members, social outcasts, and church dropouts. For some, their conversion was immediate, for others it was gradual.

The exciting part for me was not only reading about lives radically transformed by God, but the evidence given to show that most of these people have since put their faith into action by establishing or being involved in Christian ministries. In some cases they've written books to share their testimonies and reach out to others lost in spiritual darkness. Contact details are listed at the end of each profile.

This book is ideal to pass onto people who are struggling with life. Janet suggests concerned Christians could sponsor her book and make copies available free in strategic places such as rehabilitation centres and prisons.

With many more stories to tell, *Radical Lives* volume two is on its way.

New Library Additions

Tehillim: Art & Praise

—A lovely compilation of 40 psalms of praise and thanksgiving. Capturing the essence of each psalm is a full-colour picture painted specifically for that psalm by one of 22 contributing Christian artists.

By Cassie Cross

kaycross@xtra.co.nz



Second Book Review



The Path Less Travelled

The poetry of Rod Hickman (volume 7)

Review by Julia Martin

As a prolific writer of poems, Rod has recently compiled this seventh anthology. In his foreword he says: 'I write very simply and draw inspiration from life as I experience it. I also like to add a spiritual dimension if applicable.'

His self-published collection contains a mixture of light-hearted poems such as *The Rescued Hedgehog*. There are also more serious ones based on Rod's life experiences such as *Money, Fame and Power*. Others have a spiritual theme and end with a relevant verse of Scripture. The booklet has an attractive cover and simple illustrations throughout.

While Rod's rhyme and rhythm may be questionable in places, it's obvious he writes for pleasure. In this edition he has included a few poems by fellow members of the New Zealand Christian Writers—Debbie McDermott, Stephen Whitwell and Janet Fleming—which gives a satisfying balance to this anthology.

Competition Results

Under 20s

Judge:
Vicki Nogaj

Requirement: Design a treasure hunt and come up with 10 creative clues to lead someone to your treasure. Use a real or imagined location or map as the basis for your hunt, and make sure you provide your reader with a starting point for the first clue. Each clue should hint at where the next clue can be found. Reveal what your treasure is at the end. 250 words.

No entries were received

Level One

Judge:
Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Write a four-minute speech on why you think family is important. Make sure you express your Christian worldview clearly, but without being preachy. 400 words.

General Comments

Congratulations to Yvonne and Cassie for entering this competition. Writing a good speech on ethical and social values (such as the importance of family) is a challenging assignment for most of us and I commend you both for doing so well.

While Cassie's entry is better written than Yvonne's in some respects, her gentle approach to the topic does not grab the attention of her audience as effectively as Yvonne's compelling statements do. The objective of a speech on social and ethical values is to persuade your hearers to accept your viewpoint. Yvonne achieved this exceptionally well. For this reason, I have awarded her a well-earned first place and Cassie a close second.

First Place



Yvonne Mossom
of Whangarei

The Role of the Family in the Future of New Zealand

It is a privilege to talk to you, young ladies, as you leave college and start out on your careers. What will you be? The choice is overwhelming. (pause)-Marine biologist, data scientist, hair stylist, BSc, BA, B Com.(pause). You will probably be an M.A. That is: mother of all, which is the most **challenging** and worthwhile. You will be the glue that holds the **family** together. Strong **families** bind society as a whole. They are the backbone of a country. New Zealand depends on strong **families**.

This country is made up of communities. They may be on a sheep station, in a resort village or even a neighbourhood street. **Families** are the building blocks. Mutual support, social responsibility, and values are ideally the keynotes of each unit.

So....How do you begin to create this important building block? The main partners in this enterprise need to complement each other. It would be a great help to you if you found someone who would change nappies in the dead of night, take out the rubbish in the pouring rain and wash mountains of dishes at the end of a long day. Wouldn't that be great? (pause) **There are higher issues.** (pause) If you are going to guide youngsters in this venture you will have to be able to teach

them how to get along with their peers, their older relatives and neighbours. Generosity does not come easily to young children. They need to know that lying, stealing, and gossiping are not permitted. Now...isn't that a challenge?

Where do you start? One of the ways that Jesus used to grab the disciples attention was when they were having a meal; for example in the upper room just before His crucifixion and on the beach after the resurrection.

So...At the evening meal, (pause) all devices turned off, (pause) after Grace,(pause) opportunities will arise to enable you to show how **self-control** is the aim of every individual. Your role is to provide the food, guide the children through stressful situations, and teach them how to protect themselves from the challenging world. Show that you can laugh with them and care for them. The demonstration of your love will be an example which they can copy throughout their lives.

May God guide you and bless you in this career of highest responsibility.

Judge's Comments

Yvonne has met the requirements of this competition exceptionally well. Her speech is strong, persuasive and would, I believe, deeply impact her targeted age group. There is also a very good flow to her speech and I like her strategic use of the Master of Arts (MA) abbreviation to stress the point she wants to get across. This adds a touch of humour that young people like.

By putting key words in bold and showing the speaker where to pause, Yvonne has ensured the main points of her speech will be emphasised correctly and the takeaway message conveyed strongly to the hearers. This is the art of good speech writing and I commend Yvonne for using this clever technique.

Apart from some unnecessary spaces before commas, Yvonne's punctuation and grammar are good. The only areas for revision or correction are:

- *Para 1—no hyphen is required after the first (pause).*
- *Para 1—sentence 4: If an abbreviation is in block capitals, then its definition should be written in Title Case. I therefore suggest writing the first letters of 'Mother Of All' as capitals.*
- *Para 2—sentence 3: no comma is needed after '...social responsibility'.*
- *Para 4—sentence 2: put an apostrophe after disciples to show it is a plural.*
- *Para 5—while sentence 1 is clumsy, it would work well when read aloud to an audience of teenagers who are often hooked to their devices. I therefore feel it should remain as it is.*

Once again, well done Yvonne for a highly commendable entry. I look forward to receiving more from you.

Second Place



Cassie Cross
of Whangaparaoa

Why I think family is important

Why do I think family is important? That's a big question.

Firstly let's examine what constitutes a family. Some examples of families are humans, animals, church meetings, choirs, home meeting and other congregations. These groups tend to look out for one another, and are supportive. Animal groups stick close together for they are

aware of the dangers of being separated from each other and the perils of doing so. Once they are separated they can be brought down and killed for food for hungry animals and their families. They call to each other, in a way that only they can understand, and therefore emulating humans in their way of broadcasting danger.

Let's look at genetic families. These are tied by bloodlines and genetics. To me these are important families. If, throughout the generations, the parents are caring, loving, and follow the laws of the land and the bible, then these families should thrive. The guiding of the children and teens by parents, grandparents and great grandparents is most important. They will then learn both worldly laws and Gods laws. I know that my Grandmother sowed the seeds of faith into my life and I am most grateful to her for that.

Families can work together for a common good. Some go into business and work and live together. Some stay connected and their children are homeschooled evoking a close knit family environment. I have witnessed one such family who where in a musical production I was in. I couldn't help notice how close they where.

Adopted children, who are shown unconditional love, can also thrive in their adoptive family. Interestingly in the wild there is generally no adoption of young who loose their mothers although this happens on rare occasions. Adoption in the Bible was generally for inheritance sake Gen. 15:2. If there were no sons to inherit, a manservant was sometimes adopted for this reason. But in this scripture God provided the son.

We were intricately formed in our mother's wombs as stated in Jer. 1:5. We were thought of and pre planned long before birth by God our designer. We are not only members of earthly families we are also

members of Gods family as sons and daughters.

So to conclude I firmly believe that families are very important and I believe the most important family is the family of Gods people.

Judge's Comments

Cassie has successfully met the main requirement of this competition by clearly explaining why she believes family is important. Her speech is also well written and flows well. However, when reading her speech aloud, I feel its impact would be strengthened by inserting some compelling statements that capture the audience's attention and ensure they receive the takeaway message loud and clear. This is important when speaking on value systems as the objective of such a speech is to really get people thinking about what is important.

Scripture references should be written in full (i.e. as they would be spoken) not abbreviated, in order to prevent making a mistake when reading the speech aloud.

Besides two spelling mistakes, there are few other areas for correction. They are:

- *Para 1—no comma is required after '...one another' (sentence 3) or '...each other' (sentence 6).*
- *Para 2—sentence 6b: tenses are incorrect. I therefore suggest rewriting it as '... emulate humans in how...'*
- *Paras 3, 5 and 6—put an apostrophe in God's, to show it is a possessive noun.*
- *Para 3—sentence 7: Delete the first 'that' in this sentence. It is unnecessary.*
- *Para 5—sentence 1: the commas in this sentence are unnecessary.*
- *Para 5—sentence 2 would read better if a comma was put after 'Interestingly' and 'their mothers'.*

Well done, Cassie, for a well-written and carefully-thought-out entry. I look forward to receiving more from you.

Level Two

Judge: Jan Pendergrast

Requirement: Write a collection of treasured moments and memories to make up a written treasure chest. Try and write a short paragraph per memory or one sentence for shorter moments. Give each one a title or precious stone e.g. Ruby. Max 500 words.

General Comments

I was pleased to receive five original entries for this competition, two from men—Denis and Dennis. Well done, guys!

All the manuscripts were tidily presented with interesting titles, and all included word counts and attributions. All I had to do was critique/judge and enjoy.

Some punctuation and spelling issues were common to all entries.

1. A hyphen and a dash are different.
 - a. A hyphen is used to join two words together to create one entity. e.g. user-friendly, jump-start, up-to-date; in numbers: forty-five, sixty-six, etc; to clarify meaning: re-cover vs recover; and to split a word at the end of a line.
 - b. A dash is used in parenthesis or instead of brackets. e.g. Ruth, in her 'Camellia' paragraph, used a hyphen where she needed to use a dash—twice. My landscape plans included a drive lined with eight camellias—one for each grandchild. Then again, heart – a gift, in the same section. The 'jury is out' on whether a space is needed on either side of the dash.

To create a dash, use two hyphens followed by a word then space. Voila! The two dashes join together.

2. Common nouns do not need to be

capitalised. e.g. primary school fair, flower show, class, missions, vet clinic. However, if it is the name of the flower show capitals are in order: Ellerslie Flower Show.

Flowers, trees, and animals don't need capitals, unless, in the case of dogs, you name a breed such as German Shepherd. Daffodils, camellias, tawa, pohutukawa are all lower case.

3. Double and single speech marks are commonly confused. In New Zealand, double speech marks are used for speech, with single speech marks used for speech within speech. Single speech marks can be used for irony or emphasis, but italics can serve the same purpose.

First Place



**Ruth
Jamieson**
of Whakatane

Flower Memories

The Dahlia

I was a nervous 18-year-old going to meet my boyfriend's parents. My first impression was the winding drive amassed with flowers, the colourful dahlias standing tall. The orange-red one, my favorite, now has a spot in my garden—a memory of an exceptional mother-in-law.

The Freesia

During my single adult years, I enjoyed the short walk from church to my maternal grandmother's home. Her driveway lined with these small delicate flowers gave off a heady perfume. She was someone very special and, like that freesia smell, not easily forgotten.

The Rose

This flower, I am sure, invokes different memories for many people worldwide. The gardener may remember it for its thorns but no one can deny its beauty. To some it is the flower of love but for me it reminds me of past loved ones.

The story was told to me of how my future husband's only sister, Beth, and her husband had left for Italy three years prior as missionaries. The family was devastated with the news of her death due to an ectopic pregnancy. Their personal faith helped to get them through. The gift of a red rose from a family friend was a lasting treasure. With no New Zealand grave to visit, this rose occupied a special place in the home garden. Before the homestead was sold, I took several cuttings and now enjoy this 'Beth' rose, drinking in its perfume and remembering all those loved ones who have gone before me.

The Camellia

This small tree is one I hope to be remembered by. A dull winter's day is brighter for its flowers and the honeybee finds it a source of pollen to feed their young. My landscape plans included a drive lined with eight camellias—one for each grandchild.

One memorable mother's day I returned home from a weekend away to be greeted with pink camellias stuck into the mesh security door in the shape of a heart—a gift from my daughter-in-law and three granddaughters.

The Gerbera

Flower gardens are not my priority— to me the vegetable garden is more rewarding—so when my daughter said she wanted Gerberas for her wedding I did not really know what they looked like. Her wedding photo with that stunning bouquet of pink and white gerbera brings back memories of a picture perfect day.

The Daisy

Simple lawn daisies picked and offered with love from little hands—priceless. These dainty white flowers with short stems are worn as a hair decoration until they fall out or are forgotten about. I do hope my treasured granddaughters don't outgrow bringing their Nana handpicked flowers.

The Ragwort

When asked of a memory flower, my husband quickly replied, "ragwort." During a weekend stay on my parent's farm early in our courtship, he remembers my father taking him out to pull ragwort. This was a one time event—he bought a fishing rod soon after. Saturdays to him, were his day off. Even weed flowers invoke memories.

Judge's Comments

I enjoyed Ruth's use of flowers for her treasured memories. Her reasons for these memories were so poignant, I'm unlikely to forget them! I have covered the dash issue. I prefer the use of 'scent' rather than 'smell' when referring to freesias. Mentioning ragwort as the last flower had a contrasting and powerful impact. Well done, Ruth. Thank you.

Some suggestions (underlined words are recommended inserts / replacements):

The rose

It would be more active if the sentence began, 'I was told the story of how...' or 'My mother-in-law told me...'

Their personal faith helped ~~to get~~ them through this loss.

...now enjoy this 'Beth' rose in my garden, drinking in...

The Camellia

'Mother's Day...' should be in title case.

The Gerbera

...priority—to me the vegetable garden is more rewarding—so when...

...white gerberas bring back memories of a picture-perfect day.

The Daisy

from little hands is priceless. / ...fall out or are forgotten ~~about~~. / hand-picked

Ragwort

When asked for a memory... / ...replied, "Ragwort".

This was a one-time event. He bought a fishing rod soon after. Saturdays ~~to him~~ were...

Second Place



**Lynda
Otter**

of Tamatea, Napier

Golden moments

Belonging

"Everyone in the car" – a familiar call from dad as we prepared to drive to one of our extended family picnics with a host of aunts, uncles and cousins. We unpack still warm bacon and egg pie, tender corned beef, salads, home baking, homemade relishes and preserves. The sunshine sparkles on the river and smoke spirals lazily into the bright summer sky from the fire heating the water in the thermette. Days of family, fun, love and laughter.

Security

Coming home from school on a wet and cold winter's day to the smell of home-baking. As we sit at the table, Mum hands us a hot Milo and a sweet snack still warm out of the oven. A hot bubble bath waits, the fragrance scenting the steam as it drifts into the hallway.

Bliss

The sharp fruity smell from the box of Red Delicious apples stored in the laundry as I scuttle through to the toilet on a cold frosty morning.

Happiness

Monday evenings – mum, dad, my sister and I squashed onto the bed listening to Dexter Dutton on the radio.

Surrender

The Holy and solemn moment in 1990 as I am enrolled as a Senior Soldier in the Salvation Army in Napier. My love for God as I commit to worship and serve him through the Salvation Army. The way God has never given up on me as I continue to journey with Him.

Love

Sunday mornings with my husband and young children cuddled in bed listening to Children's Hour.

Thanksgiving

Watching my son playing guitar in the Music Team, singing praise songs with his eyes closed and giving his all to His Saviour. My daughter worshipping in dance, totally unaware of the congregation and dancing for an audience of One. A member of the congregation telling me with tears in her eyes "she took me into the very throne room of God." Both my children loving God and using the beautiful gifts He gave them.

Letting go

Watching my son committing himself in marriage to a beautiful Christian woman from a Christian family. Knowing that although I will always be his 'Ma', he is now responsible for his own family and has his own journey to take.

Delight

Watching our two year old grandson meet his new sister. Seeing the wonder on his

little face as her touches her gently, looks up at his mother and says, "I want to hold it!"

Gratitude

Sitting with my 92 year old father, teacher, mentor and greatest supporter during the last four hours of his life and seeing the trust and peace on his face as Jesus came to take him home.

Joy

Seeing my talented daughter grow in confidence and step out of her comfort zone in spite of crippling anxiety, to pursue her God-given passion and dream. Being amazed at her creativity and the path God is leading her down.

Contentment

The mellow late autumn sun slanting through our lounge windows and touching everything with gold.

Judge's Comments

Lynda's list of memories was long, but full of wonderful moments—the kind to which we can relate well, especially as mothers. Not quite bullet-point, her memories were succinct and meaningful. I particularly liked the imagery in the Bliss paragraph, and the last left me with a feeling of wonderful contentment. You expressed yourself well, Lynda. Thank you.

Some suggestions (underlined words are recommended inserts / replacements):

Belonging

"Everyone in the car," came the familiar call from Dad as we prepared...

The sunshine sparkles on the river and smoke from the fire heating the water in the thermette spirals lazily into the bright summer sky. (This leaves us up in the sky, rather than coming back down to the thermette.)

... still warm from the oven.

Security

A hot bubble bath waits, the drifting steam carrying the fragrance into the hallway. (Less awkward.)

Happiness

Monday evenings. Mum, Dad, my sister and I squashed on to the bed listening to Dexter Dutton on the radio.

...in her eyes, "she took me into the very throne room of God".

Delight

Watching our two-year-old grandson meet his new sister. Seeing the wonder on his little face as he touches...

Gratitude

Sitting with my 92-year-old father, teacher, mentor and greatest supporter, during...

...leading her on.

Third Place



**Dennis
McLeod**
of Hamilton

Treasured Moments

New Life

I was not able to attend the birth of my first three children but for the forth I was there. To see my child being born was one of the greatest moments of my life and one I will never forget. To see him change from blue to pink and hear his first cry, it was like music to my ears and a joy to my soul.

New start

After being left by my first wife the world was a very dark place but then I met my

Penny. I had spoken, not a prayer, that I would like a tall English woman as a wife. Then I met this tall English lady one night at a dance on the 7/7/77, we danced the night away and married six months later. She has been by my side in the good times and dark times, ever since. We came to the Lord together, were baptised together and have served the Lord together and will do so from now until the end.

Jesus my Lord

When I took my first steps with the Lord. I was like a child exploring their world for the first time. The world was now different from the one I left behind. The flowers were brighter the sky bluer and my life changed for the better in an instant. I started to live in a whole new understanding of what life was about and looked on others through much different eyes.

Bethlehem

Serving in Bethlehem was a real blessing. To be in the birthplace of Jesus, to read in the word this was the very place David lived and we were living there. To be there on Christmas Eve, not once but three times, was beyond anything I could have dreamed of just a few short years earlier when I accepted Jesus as Lord.

Jerusalem

The City of the Great King, Jerusalem, I have spent many hours and days exploring the streets and the history of this magnificent city with my wife Penny. We walked around the outside of the city on a very warm summers day. We stopped at each gate, praying and remembering what part of history each has played and will play in the future. This was the city Jesus entered in glory and left in shame but then we visited the Garden Tomb and saw it was empty, as the hope for all mankind had risen to give a hope and a future to all.

God's Supply

There have been many times we have seen our prayers answered when living by faith in the mission field. God's supply was always there, from a car to get around in to the simplest meal. Like the time we sat in front of a café in Jerusalem eating a bowl of chips between us, because that was all we could afford at the time, and it started to rain. We put up the umbrella and continued to enjoy our meal giving thanks to God.

Judge's Comments

Dennis's memories and subtitles are varied and worldwide. I enjoyed reading about your special time spent with Penny in Israel. Thank you for sharing the wonder of your moments.

Some suggestions (underlined words are recommended inserts / replacements):

New Life

I was not able to attend the birth of my first three children, but for the fourth...

...hear his first cry was like music...

New start

After my first wife left, the world was a very dark place—until I met my Penny.

I had spoken, not a prayer, that I...

At a dance on the night of 7/7/77, I met this tall English lady. We danced... She has been by my side in the good times, the dark times, and ever since. We came to the Lord together, were baptised together and have served the Lord together. We will do so ~~from~~ now until the end.

Jesus my Lord

When I took my first steps with the Lord, I was like a child exploring his world...

...brighter, the sky bluer, and my...

Bethlehem

We were living in the birthplace of Jesus—the same place King David lived as a young man.

Jerusalem

I have spent many hours and days exploring the streets and the history of this magnificent City of the Great King, Jerusalem, with my wife Penny.

...left in shame. We visited the empty Garden Tomb from where the Hope for all mankind...

God's Supply

We have seen our prayers answered often while living by faith in the mission field.

Once, while we sat in front of a café in Jerusalem eating a bowl of chips between us—that was all we could afford at the time—it started to rain. We put up the umbrella, continued to enjoy our meal, and gave thanks to God.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: Write a practical but sensitively worded letter to a friend who is going through a trial similar to one you have experienced. Tell how God helped you through your trial, and how you believe God can help your friend through his or her trial. 200-250 words.

General Comments

I received six excellent entries and they were all of a high standard which made judging difficult.

Letter writing of this nature must come from the heart and convey true empathy and compassion towards the recipient. Comments and advice need to be sincere and discreet. The tone of the letter must not be patronising or insensitive otherwise the letter may do more harm than good.

Only those who have walked a similar pathway through sickness, grief, trials or

troubles of various kinds can truly counsel another person either verbally or by the written word.

In each case, all the entrants dealt with a situation they'd experienced and their comments and advice came across sincerely and sympathetically.

A letter like this is an opportunity to share one's faith in God with a needy person. Avoid preaching and using Christian terms your friend may not understand. A well-chosen verse of Scripture however, can have a real impact.

Although handwritten letters are becoming a thing of the past, there is something special about a tangible message that can be re-read and possibly stored away with personal treasures.

First Place



Lois Farrow
of Christchurch

24 Main Street
Somewhere
10th May 2017

Dear Mary

It was good to chat yesterday. Thank you for sharing about your struggle with depression.

I mentioned briefly my similar experience, and would like to tell you what helped me most. Although a long time ago, the memory is still fresh.

I tried to overcome my depression by myself for many months. It didn't work. I was barely coping with the basics of life, and that black cloud you talked about was hanging over me.

One day, while the children were at school, I decided to see a psychiatrist. On the way to the phone to ring for help a thought struck me: *What can a psychiatrist do that God can't?*

I returned to my chair, knelt down and begged God for help, praying: *Lord, please take my mind, I can't handle it myself.*

For ages I was barely even praying but just crying and giving myself over to God. That was the turning point, and I knew God had heard me.

Recovery didn't happen all at once. It was a series of ups and downs, but gradually I was getting better. When negative thoughts came, I reminded myself that God now had my mind, and he would keep it safe.

Thank God I have had no recurrence.

Isaiah 26:3 (NLT) says 'You will keep in perfect peace ... all whose thoughts are fixed on you!'

My love and prayers as you focus on Jesus, and may he bring healing.

Lois

Judge's Comments

Lois immediately identifies the issue she is writing about and shares her own experience with depression and the negative impact it was having on her life at the time. She is honest and explains in simple terms, how in desperation she reached the point where she decided to take action and get help. At this point she shares how she turned to God for help rather than human assistance and what a difference that made—even though it was a long, slow process.

I liked the sincerity of her letter and the verse of Scripture is relevant and uplifting. Lois does not preach but simply explains her personal experience of depression

and how she dealt with it with God's help. I believe this letter would give the reader hope and encouragement.

Lois's letter flows well and comes to a fitting conclusion.

The layout of the letter could be better with fewer paragraphs.

Leave out the word 'about' in the second sentence.

Para 4—remove the comma after 'one day'.

Well done Lois for an excellent letter. I'm sure many people could be helped by your experience and testimony.

Second Place



**Keith
Willis**

of Kaukapakapa

My dear Sis

How I wish I could be with you at this terrible time. I don't suppose I could do anything to ease your pain, though maybe a big brotherly hug could help a little.

I expect you are feeling angry with God for allowing that terrible accident to happen. I remember my anger when I lost my Tim. Some well-meaning person quoted the Bible verse, 'We know that all things work together for good to those that love God.' I exploded! What possible good could come out of the death of a child? However, with time, I was able to see that I had no right to tell God what he should or should not do.

It is of little help to tell you that our boys are now together in heaven where we will join them one day. Despite your present anguish you already know that. I want so

much to help you but what can I do from the other side of the world?

The only suggestion I can offer is that, after dark tonight, you go to that favourite prayer spot of yours at the bottom of your garden. Gaze for a while at the beauty and vastness of the night sky. It will remind you that we are merely the clay and the potter, the magnificent creator, is in control of everything. Allow Jesus to give you that brotherly hug that I long to give you.

Your loving brother

Jim

Judge's Comments

In his letter, Keith has chosen to share his experience of grief with his sister who lives on the other side of the world and is also grieving for a son she has just lost as the result of an accident.

Obviously he would prefer to be there with her to share her grief and give her the emotional help she needs including 'a big brotherly hug', but this is not possible, so he must convey his feelings by letter. I believe he does this well and his letter would be a real comfort to his sister.

His advice about going to her favourite prayer spot at night and gazing at the night sky to remind herself that God is in control is touching and uplifting.

As for quoting Scripture at a time like this, Keith gives a negative example, explaining how a well-meaning person chose a verse that was not appropriate at the time and caused Keith more harm than good.

Keith's letter is sincere and honest and his love shines through, offering hope and encouragement to his grieving sister.

In the last paragraph use a capital letter for 'creator' and remove the comma after it.

Place the comma after 'offer' rather than after 'that' in the first sentence of this paragraph.

Third Equal



**Pat
Kerr**
of Roxburgh

Dear Kathryn

What a shock! You were so calm and composed when you told us your latest health issue. Breast cancer!

The pills and potions they give you now have less dramatic side-effects than those I read about between the diagnosis and treatment. Sometimes it pays to research. Sometimes it is better to just 'go with the flow'.

I remember what you said to me when you visited me during my hospital stays:

Take one day at a time, so don't worry or fret.

Take the painkillers provided, that is what they are for, to kill pain!

Take it easy, for no one is indispensable.

Take God's promises seriously, for He has you in the palm of His hand.

Take all the love and gifts offered. This is your time to receive what you have given to others.

I know it is easy to talk, give advice and platitudes. But really, I found the days flew, the treatments were not as scary as I imagined, my hair grew back, and I don't miss the missing bits! The medical folk, including all the students, were wonderful to me.

My prayers are with you my dear brave friend. God willing, may you find your

journey through this situation as smooth. I found Psalm 34 very helpful, especially verse 4: ‘ I asked the Lord for help, and he answered me. He saved me from all that I feared.’

Anything you need, don’t hesitate to ask, anytime, anywhere.

Much love
Pat

Judge’s Comments

Another good letter full of helpful advice and encouragement to a friend diagnosed with breast cancer.

Pat outlines her personal experience with the disease and gives a positive view of the treatments and aftermath which would be an encouragement to someone just coming to terms with the diagnosis.

I found it interesting that Pat relays the same advice to her friend that she gave to Pat when she was undergoing treatment in hospital. This time the advice will have extra impact for her friend, I’m sure.

There is a smooth and natural transition in Pat’s letter from discussing the disease and then sharing her faith in God. The Scripture verse she quotes is appropriate and encouraging.

Para 2—replace ‘less’ with ‘fewer’.

Para 2—‘side-effects’ should be two separate words.

Para 6— ‘indispensible’ should be spelled ‘indispensable’.

Well done, Pat. I’m sure your letter would be a real blessing to your friend and give her hope and encouragement as she fights this disease.

Third Equal



**John
Lindsay**
of Christchurch

Man to Man

Dear James,

Thank you for sharing your cancer journey with me.

It’s not easy for men to discuss health matters, especially the assault on our bodies from PSA blood tests, digital rectal examinations and prostate biopsies. No room for modesty during those procedures, was there?

I’ve learned more about Prostate cancer as we’ve discussed our experiences – similar yet different.

When my cancer was discovered, I thought I would choose surgery, but after a year on the Active Surveillance programme and a second biopsy I changed my mind. Now that I’ve completed my 39 sessions of Radiation Therapy I’m content with that choice, even though the hospital visits controlled our lives for two months.

Like you, I’m grateful the cancer was detected while it was still confined to the prostate. And it’s been a blessing to talk often and watch our wives discuss how our health has affected them.

Despite the optimistic prognosis, cancer reminds us of our mortality. How reassuring to know we do not walk alone, because “God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.” Psalm 46:1

And also to know others are praying for us.

I will be praying for you and your doctor as you go in for surgery on the 15th and in the days and weeks of post-op recovery.

Your brother in Christ

John Lindsay

Judge's Comments

In his letter, John shares his personal journey with prostate cancer. He is brutally honest and his friend would probably appreciate this as most men tend to shy away from talking so openly.

John outlines his treatment options and gives his version of the course he decided to take and its impact on his life and that of his wife.

John shares his faith in God gently and sincerely, and quotes an uplifting verse from the psalms.

He emphasises the importance of prayer and promises to support his friend in this way.

Such a letter I'm sure would be a real comfort and encouragement to the recipient. Well done!

There are a few corrections:

Para 2—replace 'was there?' with 'is there?'

Para 3—no capital for 'Prostate'.

Para 4—no capitals for 'Active Surveillance' or 'Radiation Therapy'.

Para 4—place a comma after 'biopsy'.

Para 5—'And it's been a blessing to talk often and watch our wives discuss how our health has affected them' is a clumsy sentence.

Para 7—Replace this poorly constructed sentence with: 'It also helps to know others are praying for us'.

Writers Groups

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If you are keen on joining one of these groups, please feel free to contact the group leader / host in your area for further details.

Competitions for June 2017

Due by July 10th

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

Font: Ariel, 10 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: Retell a lesser known Bible story in a manner that would appeal to a teenager. Use language appropriate to this age group and avoid being preachy. 500 words max. (Include titles and scripture references in your word count.)

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



Debbie

Level Two—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: Write a letter to the editor on a current controversial topic, seeking to include a message without being too preachy. Keep it brief. 250 words

Email entry to: Janet Fleming at: mjflamingos@xtra.co.nz



Janet

Level Three—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: Research an archaeological discovery made in the past 100 years which reinforces the authenticity of the Bible. Then write an article for a suitable magazine (which you may name) about this research. Focus on the content rather than your thoughts, and make sure the article flows well. Include a brief bibliography. The main content of the article (that is, excluding the bibliography) must not exceed 400 words.

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



Jan

Under 20s—for members 7-19 years old

Requirement: Personal Testimony: When have you applied the phrase 'No Fear' in your life? 450 words maximum.

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



Vicki



NZ CHRISTIAN writers



JANET BALCOMBE conquered a feral Meth-addiction in another life, and her memoir *The Wild Side* continues to bring hope to many. The Ashton Wylie Literary Award finalist lives a supernaturally restored life with her husband and son in Ruawai, Northland. She comes out to forage for food and for speaking engagements, encouraging others with her life experience and humour. She loves seeing people set free from the many bondages they find themselves struggling with, and together with husband Ray Curle, ministers in healing and deliverance.

Janet writes true-life stories and about the things that matter, lifting the truth above the quagmire of deception called 'enlightenment.' She writes for the rebels, the addicts and the broken-hearted.

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