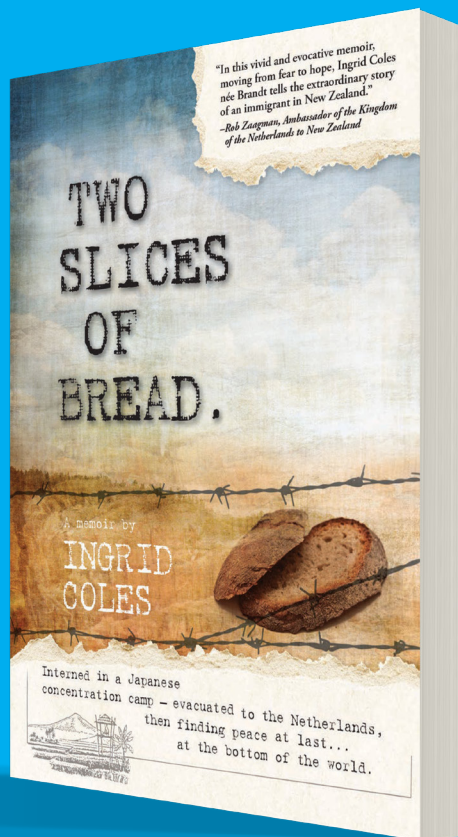


FEBRUARY - MARCH 2019

THE CHRISTIAN Writer



BOOK REVIEW

Two Slices of Bread

BY INGRID COLES

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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Post a copy of your book to Julia Martin

286 Karapiro Road, RD4, Cambridge 3496

The Christian Writer is published bimonthly by 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.

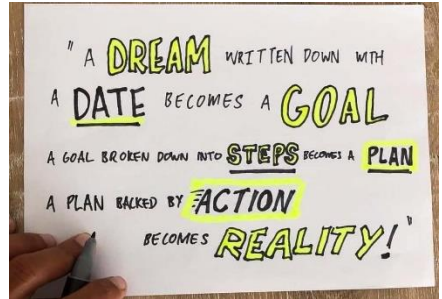
Website:

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

Welcome to 2019! I trust you have been experiencing an inspiring start to the new year. Just recently I saw a fantastic post on LinkedIn that shared the following: 'A DREAM written down with a DATE becomes a GOAL. A goal broken down into STEPS becomes a PLAN. A plan backed by ACTION becomes REALITY!' I was positively struck by the simplicity of these statements. It reminded me of the simple inspiration I needed to step in to publishing my first book. Several years later I used the same principles to bring intentionality in completing my fourth self-published book. Sometimes all it takes is a little inspiration.



In this edition of The Christian Writer we feature Ingrid Coles book *Two Slices of Bread*. This true account about Ingrid Coles, a World War II Japanese concentration camp survivor, has been highly recommended by several of our members. *Two Slices of Bread* is a Nielsen's Top 20 Bestseller and continues to be a powerful narrative of tragedy to hope.

This is also our last call for members and their friends to join us at our Retreat 2019 at the Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga. Dates are booked for exclusive use from Thursday 25th April to Sunday 28th April 2019. You'll be encouraged and inspired by our special keynote speakers. Seminar sessions include: 'Wrestling with Robust Research' (Keith Newman), 'Rewriting our History' (Keith Newman), ProWritingAid: Take Your Manuscript From Boring to Bedazzle' (Angela Curtis), 'Book Trailer Concept to Completion' (Angela Curtis), 'Bringing Writing to life through Film' (Stephen Shephard), 'Prophecy throughout Scripture' (Stephen Shephard), 'The Vocation of Writing: Insights from my First Book' (Jen Gibbs), and 'Writing for Children: Insights from my First Collection' (Jen Gibbs).

Additional details regarding our Retreat 2019 Programme and Registration Form are available here: www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2019/

To book your place, please email Jan Pendergrast today: jan@roads-end.co.nz

May this year bring you abundant blessings in your writing journey, 'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith' (Hebrews 12:2 NKJV).

Blessings,
Justin St Vincent

BOOK
TODAY!

NZ CHRISTIAN
writers

RETREAT

APRIL 25TH - 28TH 2019

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George Bryant's New Year Honour Award

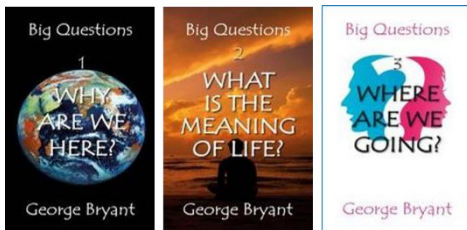
Report by Julia Martin

A crowd of invited guests from all walks of life gathered in Tauranga in January to celebrate George Bryant's recent New Year's Honour Award.

George received a well-deserved Queens Service Medal (QSM), awarded by the Government for services to the community.

George related how as a school boy his aim in life was to help people and make the world a better place. He's achieved that goal in so many areas of endeavour—as a teacher, preacher, politician, public speaker, social worker, writer and publisher.

The evening's celebration coincided with the launch of his new series of three booklets written to address the big questions of life:



1. Why are we here?
2. What is the meaning of life?
3. Where are we going?

Based on careful research and wide experience, George attempts to answer these crucial questions. I recommend these small, well-written booklets as a useful tool for sharing our Christian faith with secular thinkers and those who are contemplating these puzzling issues.



George with his wife Joan and a room full of guests in the background

Available from DayStar Books for \$7.00 each or \$20.00 for any three.

www.georgebryant.co.nz / bryantgw@xtra.co.nz

Rules or Traditions?

By Pat Kerr

Mark 7:11 – NKJV

Corban is a New Zealand wine brand is it not? True, but have you heard of Corban in the Bible? It is a manmade rule, a tradition of the religious, which allows the giving of gifts to God to supersede the rules of God: ‘Honour your father and your mother’ and ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’

God made the Ten Rules, wrote them himself on stone, and gave them to Moses to deliver to the Jews his chosen people, so recently set free from slavery in Egypt.

‘Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.’ This is God’s rule #5 of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:12). These commandments are not up for reinterpretation, watering down, neglecting (without peril), or replacing.

Corban, giving gifts to God, was a manmade tradition which allowed a person to neglect his parents care in their declining years. The religious loved this tradition; it sustained their lifestyle. Jesus loathed it. He included his loathing of it in his tongue lashing of another tradition, ritual hand washing before eating.

“But you say, (Pharisees/hypocrites) ‘if a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you MIGHT HAVE (my emphasis) received from me is Corban” — (that is, a gift to God) — then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.” (v11-13)

Corban sounded good: giving money for God’s work, but the tradition lacked love and commitment for the giver’s own family, his parents. When the motive is wrong, the giving is null and void. God doesn’t need any money; he made the world. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He accepts gifts given in love after all other commitments are met. To demand money is not God’s method. He looks at the heart, the intent, and appreciates the widow’s mite more than the bucket of money from the wealthy. Corban, or gift of money to God, is only acceptable when the motive is pure, not tradition, self-serving, point scoring or a similar manmade gesture.

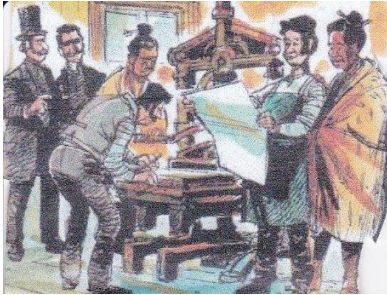
Jesus came to fulfil the law, to replace the TEN Commandments with TWO: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength’ (Mark 12:30) and ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’ (v31).

God’s rule is love, not tradition.

WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian writing of
today and yesteryear—

Series by Frederick Swallow



William Colenso

of the Church Missionary Society, a master printer, typesetter and bookbinder, arrived in Pahiā on December 30, 1834 with a Stanhope press, aiming to print New Zealand's first Scriptures in Maori. But printing equipment was missing. Undaunted, Colenso, fluent in Maori, improvised. A Waitangi River stone cut flat served as a type table with locally made wooden type cases. Missionaries gave fancy paper for covers.

On February 17, 1835 he pulled proofs of Ephesians and Philippians. In 1837 he set, bound and printed 5000 New Testaments of 356 pages, funded by the Bible Society. Copies sold readily for four shillings or three bushels of potatoes.

In 1830 Rev William Yate (CMS) of Kerikeri began printing hymns and a catechism in New Zealand.

The Book Launch

by Rod Hickman

It was Sunday morning
and I set up a table
To display my new book
to promote if I'm able
I was excited to give the first fifty away
But only one person came
and all I felt was dismay

I packed up my stuff
and felt real dejected
What had I done wrong?
was what I reflected
Does anyone know or
does anyone care?
Have your dreams smashed on rocks,
Have you been there?

Now my friend came with me
to help out that day
"God knows your heart, don't worry,"
the words she did say
So I'll not give up but try again soon
Perhaps next Saturday
and open at noon

We all face setbacks,
some big and some small
Try to remain positive
when your back's to the wall
Never give up and never give in
Tomorrow's another day,
I'm expecting to win



Literary Devices

Discourse

Foucault defines discourse as, 'Systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, and courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak.' Originally, it has roots in the Latin language. The term assumes slightly different meanings in different contexts. In literature, discourse means speech or writing, normally longer than sentences, which deals with a certain subject formally. In other words, discourse is the presentation of language in its entirety while performing an intellectual inquiry in a particular area or field, such as theological discourse or cultural discourse.

General Classifications of Discourse

Exposition

The main focus of this type of discourse is to make the audience aware about the topic of the discussion. *Definitions and comparative analysis of different ideas and beliefs* are examples of discourse exposition.

Narration

Narration is a type of discourse that relies on stories, folklore or a drama as a medium of communication. *Stage play, story and folklore* are narrative discourse examples.

Description

This type involves describing something in relation to the senses. Descriptive discourse enables the audience to develop a mental picture of what is being discussed. *Descriptive parts of novel or essay* are descriptive discourse examples.

Argument

This type of discourse is based on valid logic and, through correct reasoning, tries to motivate the audience. Examples include *lectures, essays and prose*.

Examples of Discourse in Literature

Poetic Discourse

Poetic discourse is a type of literary conversation which focuses on the expression of feelings, ideas, imaginations, events, and places through specific rhymes and rhythms. Poetic discourse makes use of common words in appealing ways to present feelings and emotions. The mechanism of poetic discourse involves certain steps starting from different sources, then entering the mental process, mental realisation, and then finally into a finished product as poetry.

Example #1: A Character – by William Wordsworth

*I marvel how Nature could ever find space
For so many strange contrasts in one human face:
There's thought and no thought, and there's paleness and bloom
And bustle and sluggishness, pleasure and gloom.*

Expressive Discourse

Expressive discourse does not involve the presentation of facts or the motivating of others but is rather a reflection of our emotions that form the foundation of our expressions. This is a form of basic or entry-level discourse and is beneficial for beginners in the field of literature. It primarily deals with generating ideas with no concrete source. Examples include academic essays and diaries.

Example #2: The Diary of Samuel Pepys – by Samuel Pepys, 1660

We met very early at our office this morning to pick out the twenty-five ships which are to be first paid off. After that to Westminster and dined with Mr Dalton at his office, where we had one great court dish, but our papers not being done we could [not] make an end of our business till Monday next. Mr Dalton and I over the water to our landlord Vanly, with whom we agree as to Dalton...

Transactional Discourse

The basic aim in this kind of discourse is to convey the message in such a way that it is clearly understood without any confusion. Whatever is said has no ambiguity—everything is clear for the reader. Usually, this type of discourse is in active voice. Examples include *instructions, guidelines, manuals, privacy policies* and *patient instructions as written by doctors*.

Function of Discourse

The role of discourse is hard to ignore in our daily intellectual pursuits, for it provides a basis to conduct a comparative analysis and frame our perceptions about different things. For instance, two competing discourses about the civil war in Syria today can be used to qualify the war as either 'war against dictatorship' or 'war against imperialism'. On the other hand, it could be deemed as 'war against Islam' or 'war for humanity'. Thus, both discourses provide a distinct style, vocabulary and presentation which are required to convey the respective ideas to a specific audience.

According to Jacques Lucan and Ferdinand de Saussure, language (discourse) is the main force which works behind all kinds of human activities and changes in social fabric; whereas Modernists attribute discourse to development and progress. Another important function of discourse is to generate and preserve truth as argued by the Postmodernist theories.

With acknowledgements to <https://literarydevices.net>

The Cross an Eraser

By Debbie McDermott

Doing well at school was very important to me, so I worked hard to get the good marks I did. But every now and then, my assignments received as many crosses as they did ticks. While this seldom meant a fail, it was nonetheless bitterly disappointing to not do as well as I liked. However, it was those very crosses that showed me where I'd gone wrong and goaded me into trying harder next time.

Can you imagine what would have happened had my teachers decided to be 'nice' and marked all my work right regardless? While this untruthful (and unrealistic) approach might have prevented my pride and feelings from being hurt at the time, the long-term consequences would have been disastrous. This is because we as human beings learn as much, if not more, from our mistakes as we do from the things we get right. But if we are not told what those mistakes are, then we will be fooled into believing we are right all the time. This is a great danger. Unteachability is one of the key roots of pride and will trip us up every time.



Scholars are unsure as to why a cross is used in education to mark something as incorrect. From a Christian point of view, I find it intriguing that this symbol is used. There is one big difference, though. When Jesus hung on his Cross 2000 years ago, it was not to highlight the incorrectness of sin. This had already been done throughout the generations in God's teachings recorded by the Jews in the Holy Scriptures. Rather, it was to erase sin from our lives through the power of his grace, forgiveness, love and mercy, effected through the shedding of his blood, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into Heaven.

However, this erasing of sin through his great and most wonderful sacrifice is not automatic. It must be received as a gift, BUT we can only do this by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. And what better person to trust than the one whose love never fails?

WELCOME

New Members

Brian Cavit	Bay of Plenty
Jean Crane	Tauranga
June Dooney	Tauranga
Rachel Larkin	Auckland
Staci McLean	East Auckland
Neil Summers	East Auckland

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to email your photo and mini bio to Justin
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for uploading to our website

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If you would like to join or find out more
about the group in your area, please don't
hesitate to contact the group leader.

The Truthful Writer

by Janice Gillgren

While politicians frequently have reputations for being 'economic' with the truth (and overly generous with comments that say very little), people usually expect better from writers.

Readers want to be able to trust writers, and so they should!

When Jesus was brought before the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate, Pilate asked the famous question during their brief conversation: 'What is truth?' (John 18:38)

This question is still vitally important and often asked today.

However, sometimes it isn't very easy to find the truth, or be sure what someone claims to be the truth actually is so. Perhaps you have been given very interesting information, which, if true as claimed, could be vitally important for some issue; but if untrue, could cause significant confusion or worse problems. What do you do?

It is well known that witnesses to an event (such as a car accident) will each give their own version of what happened, and each version may differ remarkably from the others.

What 'truth' do you use? What do you need to convey? How do you handle the truth in awkward situations?

Here are some tips to help navigate you through what can be a quagmire. They are intended particularly for article writing:

- Obtain the most reliable sources you can.
- Give preference to those sources, particularly where they are individual people, who are able and willing to be named and directly quoted. Name these sources as soon as possible in the article (unless inappropriate), even if you summarise this information at first and give fuller detail later.
- If you have conflicting information, summarise each side at the start and give fuller information later in the article if relevant. This will avoid cluttering up the beginning of your article. It may be best to avoid naming your sources of information in this case. Of course, if someone specifically asks not to be named, you will have to agree to and honour that request.
- If it is too difficult to confirm the truth of what has been claimed, ask yourself if it is actually important enough to be included at all.

- Beware of using judgemental verbs about anyone you quote, such as he or she 'disclosed', 'rubbished' or 'refuted', unless they really do apply. Such attributions can imply a lot more than what the person actually said. 'Said' (or 'says') is nearly always the best attribution.
- Include the context of the information as well where you can. For example, was the person a witness at the scene of a crime? Was the information obtained from a less direct source?
- While there isn't copyright in news itself, there is copyright in the way this news is written or otherwise conveyed (such as radio or TV). Therefore, if you are taking news from elsewhere, keep it short, make sure it retains the sense and context of the original and — most importantly — state your source.
- If you want to quote more than a brief section, or use photographs or drawings, either get permission or don't use it or them. (How brief that section is may depend on the country you're in, or other criteria, so I won't attempt to define it here.)
- If you want to use photographs or drawings, permission is essential.

These are just some tips. There are many more things that can be considered.

The point is, if you gain and keep your reputation as being a truthful writer, you will be trusted as such.

Clever Anagrams

PRESBYTERIAN

rearrange the letters and you get

Best in Prayer

ASTRONOMER

rearrange the letters and you get

Moon Starer

THE EYES

rearrange the letters and you get

They See

THE MORSE CODE

rearrange the letters and you get

Here Come Dots

SLOT MACHINES

rearrange the letters and you get

Cash Lost In Me

ANIMOSITY

rearrange the letters and you get

Is No Amity

SNOOZE ALARMS

rearrange the letters and you get

Alas! No More Zs

A DECIMAL POINT

rearrange the letters and you get

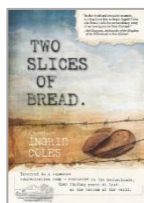
I'm a Dot in Place

ELEVEN PLUS TWO

rearrange the letters and you get

Twelve Plus One

Featured Book Review



Two Slices of Bread

By Ingrid Coles

Published by Wild Side Publishing

Reviewed by Julia Martin

The author was only three months old in 1942 when her Dutch parents and four older siblings were rounded up by the Japanese in Dutch East Indies (Indonesia today) and incarcerated in prison-of-war camps. Ingrid gives a harrowing account of their three years of brutality, starvation, disease and appalling living conditions at the hands of their cruel captors.

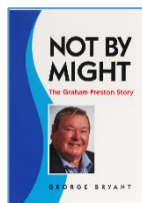
Her father, aged 43, died in a prison camp and her disabled little brother died en route to Holland when the rest of the family was evacuated during the Indonesian War of Independence. Back in the Netherlands, the family sought to pick up the pieces of their lives in a different and often unwelcoming environment. They all suffered physically and psychologically from the horrors of the war, especially the mother, and this added a huge burden of care on her children.

Ingrid's honest but gruelling autobiography gives valuable insights into the enormous disruption and suffering war causes on the lives of innocent people. It also shows their courage and fortitude to battle on and overcome the deprivation and traumas of the past.

In 1958 at age 16, Ingrid immigrated to New Zealand alone to train as a nurse. There she made a new life for herself. With a strong faith in God she testifies: "It seems hard to do, but for our own good and with God's help, we can rid ourselves of hate and forgive those who treated us badly."

It's a captivating and unforgettable story and I recommend it to all readers.

Second Book Review



Not by Might

By George Bryant

Published by DayStar Books

Reviewed by Julia Martin

While there may be many visionaries among us, few actually turn their dreams into reality. But not so with Graham Preston—the founder of Bethlehem College in Tauranga, the largest Christian school of its kind in Australasia.

With a similar background, prolific writer, George Bryant, has interviewed and researched the life of Graham Preston, and in this biography he portrays a man with exceptional leadership ability, vision, courage, perseverance, faith and integrity.

At 20, Graham committed his life to Jesus Christ and the effect of this decision permeated every aspect of his life thereafter.

In 1970 he felt led to start a Christian school, but it took a further 17 years of successes and setbacks to see his dream underway with a new school established at Bethlehem, and 100 students enrolled. He believed Bible-centred education was the means of social transformation. The school's mission statement vowed 'to provide a biblical, Christ-centred education for the preparation of students for effective leadership and service, while aiming for excellence in all educational and personal endeavour'. Since then the school has gone from strength to strength, and Graham has helped establish other Christian schools both in New Zealand and overseas.

Whether you're interested in education or not, this well-written biography makes compelling reading and shows what God can achieve through an ordinary life completely surrendered to Him.

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Write an action-packed adventure story that would be enjoyed by teenagers. Include a God factor and ensure the plot is exciting while being believable at the same time. Use appropriate language and give your story a satisfactory ending. 500 words.

General Comments

I received two entries to this competition, one of which was from first-time entrant and competition winner Kathryn Drinkwater. Welcome Kathryn. I hope you have a long and happy association with New Zealand Christian Writers.

Unfortunately, the other entrant was only awarded fourth place because they failed to meet the key requirements of the competition and made too many mistakes with grammar and punctuation, resulting in too low a mark for third place. Their entry will therefore not be published in this issue of the magazine, which is a pity. With some editing and more attention to detail, it has the potential to be an exciting story.

Entering competitions can be particularly challenging if the topic is outside your comfort zone or if you're experiencing a spell of writer's block. The closer the deadline looms, the greater the challenge appears. It's therefore very important to not leave writing an entry until the last minute. You must give yourself adequate time to brainstorm, carry out any research and write, check and proofread your entry before submitting it. Apart from this being a key to doing well at competition level, it will also build within you the discipline to publish quality literature. This, after all, is our goal as writers.

First Place



Kathryn
Drinkwater
of Hokianga

Sweet Surf

Sixteen-year-old Suzy glanced over her shoulder and began to paddle hard. The rising wave made her surf board pick up speed. In one quick move she stood. She felt a moment of elation then wiped out.

Seconds later her head broke the surface. She spat out water and glanced toward Matt. She'd met him for the first time today.

A laugh bubbled out of her. *What's gotten into me?* She wondered. *I've been so depressed I haven't laughed in ages.* She saw another breaker building. Swiftly she turned the board back to shore and began to paddle. She leapt up and rode the wave a few metres before falling.

Suddenly Matt was beside her, sitting on his board. "Awesome! You're learning fast."

She straddled her board, "Thanks. How long have you been a surfer?"

"My parents were part of a Christian surfer's group and took me with them as a kid."

"Christian surfers?" Suzy had been to a church only once. No one had mentioned surfing. "Did Jesus surf?" She asked, sincerely.

Matt laughed, "I reckon it's logical He can. He created the waves and He knew we'd enjoy surfing. He walked on water – surfing would come easy."

Suzy nodded. "Makes sense I guess, if He's real and all that."

He grinned, "Now I've got this awesome picture in my head; the disciples in their boat in the big waves and Jesus rides past bare-foot surfing saying, 'It's sweet surf tonight - later dudes,' and they all freak out."

Suzy laughed.

Matt's expression became earnest, "Seriously though, He's real. He's everything to me. You don't know Him yet?"

She shook her head, smiling, "This conversation is bizarre."

Matt shrugged, "I believe God wants me to tell you He loves you. He's seen your loneliness and depression and wants to help you. Just like a wave – if you move toward Him and let Him carry you – you'll catch the best ride ever."

Suzy felt goose bumps. Could God be real? Could He see her and her struggles? Did He care?

"I have been depressed," she admitted. "Sometimes I feel like I'm going nowhere."

"You have somewhere to go - into God's love. If you're willing, I'd like to lead you in a prayer and you can begin your journey with Him?"

Tears threatened as Suzy nodded and repeated the words Matt guided her to say.

Afterwards Matt let out a whoop, playfully splashing her. “Welcome to God’s family, Suzy! Have a think about something – I know where you can learn about God and get close to Him – plus you get to go surfing and make good friends. If you want, I can hook you up.”

She nodded, “Sounds cool.”

“Sweet. Let’s go surf!” Matt paddled away.

Suzy followed and rode the next wave in, grinning from ear to ear. At last she felt her life was going in the right direction.

Judge’s Comments

Kathryn has presented me with a well-written entry that has a nice, easy and natural flow to it. This is the art of good storytelling. The language used is also suitable for a teenage audience and the God factor in her story is excellent.

While the level of adventure and excitement asked for is a bit lacking, surfing is a popular sport in New Zealand so a story about two surfers will be appealing to the teenager with a passion for water sports. Equally appealing is the contrast between Suzy’s depression and the joy she is beginning to feel as Matt coaches her, jokes around a little and introduces her to Jesus.

The clear takeaway message of the whole piece can be found in paragraph 14: “I believe God wants me to tell you He loves you. He’s seen your loneliness and depression and wants to help you. Just like a wave – if you move toward Him and let Him carry you – you’ll catch the best ride ever.”

Apart from the divine pronouns which are no longer capitalised in modern literature, Kathryn’s grammar and punctuation are very good. Areas for correction:

- *Paras 1 and 10: ‘surfboard’ and ‘barefoot’ should both be one word.*
- *Para 7—final sentence: change ‘she’ to lower case and delete the unnecessary comma so it reads: ‘she asked sincerely’.*
- *Paras 10 and 13: replace the comma after ‘grinned’ and ‘smiling’ with a full stop. Few people can grin/smile and talk simultaneously.*
- *Para 10—sentence 1: Change the hyphen between ‘tonight’ and ‘later’ to a long dash.*
- *Para 14—Replace the unnecessary comma after ‘shrugged’ with a full stop. It has already been indicated that it is Matt who is speaking.*

- *Para 14—the final sentence would read better if the second long dash was replaced with a comma so that it reads: ‘Just like a wave – if you move toward Him and let Him carry you, you’ll catch the best ride ever.’*
- *Para 17—replace the hyphen with a long dash and question mark with a full stop.*
- *Para 19—I suggest replacing the long dashes in sentence 3 with full stops.*

Thank you for a good entry, Kathryn. I look forward to receiving more from you.

Level Two

Judge: Janice Gillgren

Requirement: Write a poem with a clear rhythm and rhyme, suitable for primary school children, about an aspect of our natural world that demonstrates God’s creative ability to you.

General Comments

There were three entries for this competition, two of them being new to level two. Well done for having a go so quickly. Each entrant appeared to have difficulty with the requirements, particularly for rhythm but also with using an age-appropriate language level. Susan’s entry stood out as having most successfully dealt with these challenges.

The age level for this competition is fairly wide, being for primary school children. The oldest of these children can usually read well but the youngest cannot. So what age do you aim for? Newspapers are aimed toward about an eight-year-old reader (believe it or not) and poems are probably best aimed at about the same age or younger, unless you are told otherwise. This is because children who are not yet old enough to read by themselves will have the item read to them and the simpler words aimed at that level are more likely to be understood by readers and listeners alike.

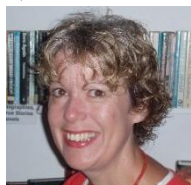
The biggest challenges in writing children’s poetry lie in making natural and appealing patterns of rhymes and rhythms using clear and simple language. Every word has to carry its weight and no word should give the impression of being there just to fit the patterns. When writing poetry, make sure your first stanza sets the rhyme pattern and rhythm beats clearly, as this creates an expectation in the reader or listener for the remainder of the poem. This is particularly important for children.

One improvement that could have been made for all entries was a more appealing title, especially as the poems are for children. Titles add value far beyond their word count.

Grammar, punctuation and spelling were all well done and the poems each fitted within the required line count, which was great to see. It isn’t necessary to include both the number of lines and the word count for poems unless required to do so.

If you don’t have contact with children, get some children’s poetry books from the library to see the language levels and simplicity of the construction, which are vitally important.

First Place



Susan
Flanagan
of Russell,
Northland

COLOURS

1. When God made our world,
He didn't just give you,
One shade of yellow,
And one shade of blue.
2. We would have made do,
With light green and dark green,
But God gave us emerald,
Kina, and more inbetween.
3. He gave us sun yellow,
Banana and kowhai too,
And He gave us sapphire,
Sea and sky blue.
4. The rainbow is a promise,
That God gave to Noah,
Never to flood the world again,
Of that we can be sure.
5. And the colours inside a rainbow,
Appear everywhere we gaze,
From the soft morning shades,
To the sun's setting rays.
6. There's apple red, rose red,
And ruby red as well,
Sunset orange, crab-claw orange,
|And the orange of a fan shell.
7. My favourite colour is purple,
Every shade is neat,
From amethyst and violets,
To the grapes I love to eat.
8. When I get to heaven,
I'm looking forward to see,
Some new and exciting colours,
Oh what a sight that will be!

Judge's Comments

Hi Susan. Congratulations on gaining first place. Your poem has a reasonably consistent beat, though I had to re-read some stanzas to be sure.

Within your theme of colours is another theme of the rainbow, and it would be worth focusing on this, with a logical progression of stanzas about the colours in the rainbow. I would therefore put the second and third stanzas much lower in the poem; possibly becoming the sixth and seventh stanzas instead. A title could also be based on this theme, such as 'A Bow of Many Colours'.

The words 'Noah' and 'sure' (4th stanza) don't rhyme well enough. The fourth line of that stanza could instead be: 'Of that we surely know'. The last line of the second stanza has too many syllables. '...and more between' would work as well. The third line of the fourth stanza has too many beats. A way to overcome this would be to turn the order of the first two words around to become: 'To never flood the world again.' This is because the word 'To' can be said as a quick half-beat that then enables the two syllables of 'never' to be spoken more clearly and keep the beat consistent too.

Although not often thought of, punctuation can also make a difference to the beat. For example, a comma usually counts as a short beat and a full stop as a slightly longer beat, especially when used in the middle of a line. They are used by poets to tell the reader when to pause. They can be very useful when you don't have quite enough syllables; or conversely you may be able to dispense with them if you have too many beats. Note, too, that it isn't necessary to include either of these at the end of each line.

The last two lines of the poem could be shortened to: 'Some new, exciting colours. Oh, what a sight for me!', which will fit better. Also, please use the line spacing and any other formatting as required by the editor.

Second Place



Sue
Thatcher
of Whangaparaoa

The Wind

The Bible says that God made things,
They're all for us to share.
God created. Wow. I'm amazed!
Let's each explore his flair.

One thing he made is called the wind.
It serves in many ways.
To cool and spread, to turn and dry,
It's helped me all my days.

Wind's an essential element,
Like water, fire and light.
God spawned these as
his baseline helps
To make his earth work right.

What fascinates about the wind
That can be felt, not seen.
It's just like God who I can't see
And yet I know it's been.

Its moods can change which causes me
To wrestle it at times.
I'm happy when its pow'r and force
Bring answers to my rhymes.

The wind will come in varied styles
And some could well be spared.
Welcome, gentle, cool and quiet,
Enormous, strong, and feared.

God planned for wind to help His earth.
It spreads the tree's new seed.
It clears the atmosphere of dirt.
Provides a human need.

God helped us learn to
harness wind
So we can use it more.
Its energy we can direct
Towards our complex chore.

So when you feel or hear the wind
I wonder if you'll think?
Of God's delight in helping us
And share a little wink!



Judge's Comments

Hi Sue. I've awarded you second place for this poem. You have met the criteria by showing how wind demonstrates God's creative ability to you and there is a clear focus on this subject. There is consistent rhythm in most stanzas and the rhyming pattern of the 2nd and 4th lines of each stanza is clear.

In the first stanza, the third line's beat has been unnecessarily stretched by the use of two full stops. You could instead say 'God created, and I'm amazed!' See my General Comments in which I make more points about rhythm.

The main problem with this poem is that the language level is too difficult for primary school children. For example, in the third stanza: 'Wind's an essential element'. As a guide, avoid words longer than two syllables for young children unless they are very commonly used in general conversation. There are also several lines that puzzle me so I doubt young children would understand them. For example, 'God spawned these as his baseline helps', 'Bring answers to my rhymes' (implying that a rhyme is a question, which it isn't) and 'The wind will come in varied styles, And some could well be spared.' The words 'complex chore' would also probably be too hard.

The last line of the seventh stanza could be improved by replacing 'Provides' with 'And meets'.

Well done for taking good note of the formatting required.

Third Place



Pauline
Marshall
of Darlington,
Christchurch

Humour in Nature (for children)

Let me introduce you to a bug in God's creation,
One who's surely earned himself the conservation prize,
Specializing in recycling, with a weird fixation,
Salvaging great heaps of dung to help it fertilise!

Yes you heard correctly, there's a beetle with a passion,
All the dung that he can find is hoarded underground,
Every day he searches like it might go out of fashion,
Never satisfied until a dung source he has found.

Cleverly he shapes it with his legs until it's rounded,
Then he rolls it speedily along the desert sands,
Backwards is his secret – yes I knew you'd be astounded,
Rolling with his four back legs and running with his hands!

How on earth, you might ask, can he see where he is going
If he's running backwards with his very precious find?
God has given to this bug a special kind of knowing,
He can find his way home by the stars – he is not blind!

When his wife is feeling that she needs some recreation
'Cos she's getting sick of staying home beneath the ground,
She will ride on top of the dung ball for variation,
Doing roly-polys that most certainly confound!

Digging all her little feet into the dung ball mixture,
Clinging to the sticky ball wherever it may roam,
Even when the ride gets rugged she remains a fixture,
Trusting in her husband's skill to drive her safely home.

This wee lady needs her fun because she's been so busy
Laying eggs in every ball of dung that they have found,
So it's no surprise that she is not the least bit dizzy
When she gets to travel roly-poly round and round.

Baby larva hatches in the dung where he's protected,
Munching on this yummy food beneath the desert sand,
'Til he changes and becomes a beetle – that's expected –
Flying everywhere to hunt for dung, as God has planned!

Judge's Comments

Hi Pauline. I have awarded you third place for this entry. Well done for your first effort at level two. The little dung beetle clearly fascinates you, and I liked the humorous descriptions of Mr Dung Beetle and his wife's peculiar ways. A catchy title such as: 'Move That Dung!' would help young readers/listeners enjoy your poem more.

Your rhythm pattern is generally clear. The main exception is at the end of the fourth stanza: 'he is not blind' which doesn't fit the beat. The last line of the seventh stanza would be best missing out the last two words. Some other lines only rhyme if very carefully read.

The rhyming pattern of the first and third lines of each stanza is clear, although 'recreation' and 'variation' (5th stanza) aren't correct because their first syllables will be accented when being read aloud, and these don't rhyme properly.

My main concerns are that you use too many words on each line (making the poem look and sound cluttered and cumbersome), and the language level is too difficult for children. See my General Comments for more explanation on what to aim for. Simplicity and clarity need to be your main goals in writing poems for children.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: An elderly person is seated in a rest home lounge. Write a character sketch describing their appearance and demeanour which give clues as to what their earlier life may have been like. (300 words)

General Comments

Writers of fiction know that well-crafted characters are a key to their success and that they play a big part in driving their stories along.

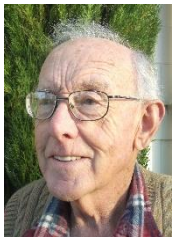
A character sketch is a snapshot of a person the writer wants the reader to know about. The sketch involves a portrayal using words alone to give the reader a strong mental picture of the character's appearance, personality and behaviour. In this assignment, clues were required to show what the person's earlier life may have been like.

While it's easy to spell out details such as age and previous lifestyle, it's more effective to 'show' rather than 'tell', thus allowing readers to draw their own conclusions. This may be shown by what the person is reading (financial, farming, fashion material) or possibly doing (handcrafts, listening to certain kinds of music). Aspects such as their clothing, deportment or skin condition may also betray information about their past life for the benefit of the reader.

Characters should be believable and memorable. Use some of the senses where appropriate and also figurative language for extra effect and interest. Try to evoke an emotional response from the reader towards the character—sympathy, pity, amusement or surprise.

I was pleased to receive five excellent entries and found placing the sketches most difficult. A warm welcome to Pamela Lowrey who has moved up to level three.

First Place



Keith
Willis
of Kaukapakapa

A Military Man

I think it was his deportment that first caught my attention. Although he was sitting, relaxed in a big arm chair, he was erect. Not stooped, as you might expect in a rest home resident. "A military man", I surmised. The rug over his knees and walker beside his chair indicated that it was many years since he had marched around the parade ground.

His white beard and lack of hair on his head, along with the straight back, gave him a rather distinguished, almost aristocratic appearance, setting him apart from the others in the room. They were mostly sleeping or gazing at nothing in particular. My “military man” on the other hand was deeply engaged with something on his lap. From the doorway where I was standing I could see his lips moving. He was obviously having an animated conversation, but with whom? Was he talking to himself?

As I moved further into the room, I became aware of the rhythmic movement of one of his hands. A very large hand I noted. Yet it was delivering a very gentle caress. I was intrigued. I didn’t want to appear intrusive but my curiosity compelled me to move closer. What was he saying and what was he caressing? Now I could see his face. A face that had obviously been exposed to an excess of sun and wind over many years. The focus of his attention was now just visible under that great hand. A tiny ginger kitten! As he gently stroked the wee thing, he was thanking God for this gift and for all the other wonderful animals that had been entrusted to his care during his long life.

Maybe he wasn’t “A military man”, but he was certainly an animal lover.

Judge’s Comments

Keith portrays a compelling picture of his character in the rest home lounge. Based on the man’s deportment, appearance and behaviour, he concludes that the person must be an ex-military man. But first assumptions can be deceiving as the writer is about to discover.

He makes good use of contrast and mystery to draw the reader into the conundrum. The man’s posture, alertness and aristocratic appearance are in sharp contrast to the other residents who are ‘mostly sleeping or gazing at nothing in particular.’ There’s also the intriguing contrast between the man’s large hands and the tiny, delicate kitten.

Keith builds up an air of mystery which draws the reader into the room. What is going on here? What is the ‘military’ man doing and saying? Is he an ex-military man after all? A twist at the end leaves me with a warm feeling and a desire to know more about the true background of the mystery rest home resident. A well-written character sketch suitable for a novel or short story.

Suggested changes:

- Para 1—‘you might expect of a rest home resident’.
- Last sentence—no need for a capital letter ‘A’. I also recommend you use single quotation marks instead of double ones and put them around ‘military’ man only.

Second Place Equal



Janet
Fleming
of Kaao

The Matriarch

She sits in her room intently watching the door.

"Hello," she greets me. "Where's Mike? I'm hoping to go home today. I've got a nurse to take down my photos."

I look at the bare walls. How many times have I gradually sneaked those pictures back on the wall only to have them removed again? That fierce determination is also reflective in her look of disgust at the safety bar by her bed. Rattling it she states, "I don't need to be in a cage!"

I sit down and we chat. Some of what she talks about is from the early days growing up in a remote area where she rode on horseback. Now she asks, "Have you been to church today? Who was there? Who spoke?"

I answer her questions, then she gestures towards the wardrobe wagging her finger at me. "Can you look for my green jacket? Someone has taken it." The jacket located she now points to her worn Bible. "I've been reading in Psalms," she says. I think of the change that came into her life when she trusted Christ and of the difference that book made in her home.

"Can you pass my watch?" she asks, pointing to the draw by her bed. I take a look and spot the missing pictures. If I'm careful I can pop some back on the wall. I glance her way. She is already dozing. Now's my chance! I reattach two pictures to the wall. Sadly at 103 she's unlikely to go home, but then, with her determination, who knows?

The pictures in place I slip back into my chair as she opens her eyes.

"Nana", I say. "It's time for me to go."

"Thanks for coming," she says, "but remember I could do with a feed of oysters."

Judge's Comments

Janet's character sketch of an elderly family member is drawn mainly from her actions and conversation which reveal her personality traits and behavioural

patterns. Her age is spelled out, but there's no mention of her appearance and clothing, other than the missing green jacket.

The dialogue reveals her strong character and determination which has carried her through her long life. We learn a little about her previous life, and her interests in church and Bible reading give clues to her past and present priorities.

The sketch is full of humour: the regular removing and replacing of the family photographs, rattling the 'cage' round her bed, the stolen jacket and her desire for 'a feed of oysters'. All these amusing incidents help build a picture of this determined lady with whom I'm sure many of us can associate.

Suggested changes.

- *Para 3—change 'reflective' (an adjective) to 'reflected' (a verb).*
- *Para 5—Place a comma after 'wardrobe'.*

Use a new line for sentence starting 'I think of the change...'

- *Para 6—'draw' should be 'drawer'.*
- *Para 7—Place a comma after 'place'.*
- *Check font and size required for these competitions.*

Janet's sketch evokes sympathy and amusement and shows a character sketch does not have to have a lot of visual details to be effective. Well done.

Second Place Equal



Jean
Shewan
of Christchurch

Life Experience

Miss Alice Templeton seats herself neatly in the far corner of the room, her arthritic hands reaching for her crochet, her eyes staring blankly ahead. She is dressed in a calf length, A-line, grey skirt, a white blouse with a touch of lace at the throat, and a grey cardigan, which has only the top two of its five buttons fastened. Her face, with its hard blue eyes and determined chin, is feathered round with short straight white hair. She wears no jewellery apart from a nurse's watch pinned to her cardigan. Her feet, covered in black Velcro-closure brogue shoes (her only concession to her physical limitations), are placed carefully together but cannot disguise her swollen ankles or her purple veined legs.

While her arthritic hands are active, in her mind she is reliving her life, dissecting again every event that brought her to this place – her family, the child, friends (all gone now), her years of caring for others, the child, – ninety-five years of experiences. She pictures her parents, her younger sister, whom she never really got to know, and wonders if things could have been different. What about the child? Where and what had he grown to be? Was he still alive?

Sadness? Regret? Anger? It is much easier to see the many mistakes, or the things left undone, than to congratulate herself on things achieved. That is not how she was raised. The years of orders, given without love, obeyed without question, until it was her turn to give the orders, and to try to share the compassion she has never received, have taken their toll. It is impossible to unbend now. But anger and regret are pointless, and she must try and connect with the staff and other residents in her new home.

Judge's Comments

In the first paragraph, Jean sets the scene with a comprehensive description of her character's appearance. Her posture, clothing and facial features denote a serious person whose past life has not been easy.

The mention of a nurse's watch pinned to her cardigan is a possible clue as to her past occupation. Alice is introduced as 'Miss', so has obviously never married. It seems however, there has been a child – a fact Alice mentions three times. This would suggest she has had a baby, possibly adopted out, resulting in pain, regret and questions that have dogged her down through the years.

Jean effectively 'shows' rather than 'tells' what has gone on in the lady's past life. There's a lot we don't get told, but our curiosity is aroused and we are left to make our own assumptions. The sketch evokes sympathy and pity for someone who has lived a life full of regrets, sadness and anger. Now in a new home, it's pleasing to see that Alice is going to try to face the future with a more positive attitude.

Suggested changes:

- *Para 5—change the tense. '...try to share the compassion she had never received'.*
- *Your title could have been more interesting, but all in all, a well written character sketch.*

Third Place



Pamela
Lowery
of Havelock North

Does it have to be this way?

"Bettina is the new lady. Just arrived! Rather hoity toity don't you think? Got Alzheimers," commented a staff member.

The new lady looks decidedly uncomfortable seated in a stiff backed chair in the resthome lounge surrounded by a number of semi-coherent men and women, all slumping in a regimented line around the walls. The atmosphere is oppressive with some nodding off, snoring, calling out pathetically or just staring vacantly into space. The TV baby sitter in the corner is blaring but no-one is paying any attention to the raucous noise.

Judging from her appearance Bettina has been a woman of means. Her clothing is classical and worn with flare. Several expensive rings adorn her fingers as she carefully adjusts them to show the very best angle. A string of costly pink pearls circle and partially obscure the wrinkles in her neck. Her hands and fingers are those of a tactile artist used to dealing with delicate fabrics or playing the piano as she lightly taps out a rhythm on the arms of the chair. Her short thinning white hair is lifeless, combed back severely giving her chiselled features a strained look. A photo she carries shows a much younger woman with striking blue eyes and curls to match.

Bettina's impaired hearing as she fumbles with her miniscule hearing aid to eliminate the constant screeching noises being emitted, coupled with poor eyesight severely limit her ability to communicate. At 90 years old, without a family, the few friends who come to visit her are ill at ease and don't stay long. Her conversation is reminiscent of a record stuck on the same groove.

What of Bettina's future? Is the bleak declining spiral inevitable? Or is there a better way?

Judge's Comments

Pamela's first paragraph tells us a lot about Bettina, while the second paragraph paints a sad picture of the environment in this rest home. As I've mentioned previously, it's more effective to 'show' rather 'tell' the reader information. In

paragraph three, the writer tells us that ‘ Bettina has been a woman of means.’ She then goes on to describe the lady’s dress and jewellery which makes the previous statement obvious to the reader. Similarly, in the fourth paragraph there is no need to tell us that Bettina had impaired hearing as this is established by the mention of her fumbling with her hearing aid. Pamela has made good use of the senses especially sight, hearing and touch.

The character sketch evokes sympathy and sadness towards the lady who has had an impressive past but is now facing a bleak future. From Pamela’s title and final questions, I get the impression there could be a hint of euthanasia?

A good effort Pamela and I look forward to more entries in level three.

Suggested changes:

- Para 1 – spacing between words needs attention.
- Para 2 – ‘rest home’ instead of ‘resthome.’
- Para 4 – ‘stuck in the same groove.’

Notice Board

Takahē Short Story Competition 2019

Judge: Nod Ghosh | **First Prize:** \$250 | **Second Prize:** \$100

Entry Fee: \$10 per story | **Deadline:** 31st March 2019

Conditions of Entry:

1. Each entry must be the original work of the person submitting it.
2. Maximum length for each story submitted is 2,500 words. Please enter the word count with your story title on the entry form.
3. The entrant’s name or nom de plume must only appear on the entry form, NOT on the manuscript

For further details on how to obtain an entry form, submit entries and pay entrance fees, please contact Jane Seaford. Email: jane-seaford@xtra.co.nz

Competitions for April 2019

Due by March 10th

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

Font: Arial, 10 pt **Heading:** Bold, 18 pt **Line spacing:** Multiple 1.2

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

Alignment: Justified. **Send a photo** of yourself for publishing purposes.

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

Level One—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Imagine you are taken back in time to be an observer of the events surrounding the Easter story as portrayed in the Bible. Describe what you see and how you feel in witnessing the Passion of Christ. Interaction with the characters in your story is allowed. 400 words.



Debbie

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

Level Two—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: "What is it about Easter that stirs you?" Imagine you are having a conversation with a friend you haven't seen for a while and your companion asks you this question. How would you answer it? Write the dialogue between you and your companion in a relaxed conversational style. 300 words.

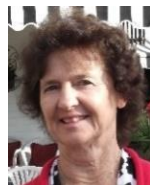


Janice

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

Level Three—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: You've just completed the manuscript of your book. Outline your strategy for getting your book into the readers' hands. Be specific about all the steps, especially editing, publishing and marketing. (400 words)



Julia

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



NZ CHRISTIAN writers



INGRID COLES is a survivor. Born in Java, Indonesia, in November 1942 she and her family endured incarceration at the hands of the Japanese invaders in separate prisoner-of-war camps. They were starved and treated abominably. Her

father died in prison camp aged 43 and her younger brother died from starvation and pneumonia aged 6.

After liberation from the Japanese in August 1945, she and her family faced the Indonesian War of Independence. In May 1946 it became so dangerous for European civilians they were evacuated to their motherland, the Netherlands. Life changed drastically for Ingrid and her three siblings, who had to learn how to cope with their mother's physical and post-traumatic-stress related illness, and their own war-time experiences.

However, Ingrid, orphaned when barely 16 years of age, immigrated to New Zealand where she eventually found the peace she longed for.

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