

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2020

THE CHRISTIAN writer

SEE INSIDE FOR

Retreat Speakers 2020
Help with Tricky English
Kiwi Sport Writer Wanted
Book Reviews
Poetry by Rodney Hickman
Competitions
and more!

A magazine of NZ Christian Writers



Mission: *Connecting Christian writers in New Zealand.*

Vision: *To cultivate, encourage and inspire a vibrant community of Christian writers throughout New Zealand.*

Values: *Christian faith, God's Word, professionalism, quality and social outreach.*

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Book Review Requests: (current members only)

Mail a copy of your book to our Book Reviewer, Julia Martin

286 Karapiro Road, RD4, Cambridge 3496 or email: reviews@nzchristianwriters.org

The Christian Writer is our bimonthly magazine published by NZ Christian Writers and distributed to all members. Contributions on the theme of writing are always welcome. If you have some advice, encouragement, or an announcement of an event of interest to members, do send it to the editor for consideration by the 10th of the month before the next publication date. Submissions should be emailed and no more than 500 words long, except at the discretion of the editor.

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

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Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor Membership Secretary Book Review Requests
Page 4	President's Report – Justin St Vincent
Page 5	2020 NZCW Retreat Dates and Speakers
Page 6	Editorial – Kathryn Drinkwater
Page 7	Professional Writing Services / Notices
Page 8	Reading for Children. Why Bother? – Julia Martin and David Hill
Page 9	Wanted by Ethnos NZ: Writers and Illustrators
Page 10	Press Release from Wild Side Publishing – Ray Curle
Page 11	Writing Briefs: Taku Paipera – Frederick Swallow
Page 11	NZCW Christchurch Writers Group Shares 25 Years Celebration Cake!
Page 11	Happy Valentines Cartoon
Page 12	Book Review: <i>My First Eighty Years</i> by Fred Barrett – Julia Martin
Page 12	Book Review: <i>Ripple Effect</i> by Shirley Jamieson – Julia Martin
Page 13	Book Review: <i>Brief Word</i> by Stephen Whitwell – Julia Martin
Page 13	Poem: Counting Stars by Rodney Hickman
Page 14	Help with Tricky English by Kathryn Drinkwater
Page 20	Writers Groups Details / Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 21	Kiwi Sport Writer Wanted by Mark Tronson
Page 22	BookPrint Advertisement
Page 23	A New Year of Writing Competitions has Begun!

CW Competitions

Page 24	Level One Results	Page 31	Level Three Results
Page 28	Level Two Results	Page 35	Competitions for April 2020

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



This month marks a significant milestone for us as NZ Christian Writers as we have now published our very first edition of *Young Christian Writer*. This is a brand-new supplement magazine which is published

three times a year for student writers. The purpose of the magazine is to cultivate, encourage and inspire a community of young Christian writers throughout New Zealand. Over the next few editions of *Young Christian Writer* readers can expect to see a collection of competitions, free giveaways, poetry, articles, short stories, puzzles, art, photography, book reviews and more. If you know a young Christian writer in your church, do encourage them to join our growing collective with a special Student Membership rate for the digital or printed magazine. Our online membership form only takes around two minutes to complete: www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/

In addition to a new magazine, throughout 2020 we will be developing a mentorship programme where the wealth of experience in our collective can help benefit those younger writers who are looking for advice, guidance and wisdom in their writing. This is how we can cultivate a vibrant community of writers that are able to be a blessing to the next generation. If this continues to resonate with you, either as a potential mentor or mentee, feel free to email me and I can share with you additional details when they become available: president@nzchristianwriters.org. We have also streamlined our printing and mailing process so that hopefully you are by now receiving our magazine much closer to our publishing date every two months. A massive thank you to Dave Palmer who for many years has served so diligently in this role to help arrange mailing to all our members nationwide.

I also want to extend a thank you to all who have already registered for our upcoming Retreat 2020. We are so enthused for our time together as a community of Christian writers. Our Retreats are a special time for our members to connect, be inspired, relax with friends and make new ones. Our last couple of retreats at the wonderful Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga have received excellent feedback from attendees who loved our time together. I highly recommend you take this time to invest in your own publishing and writing journey. We have specialists in their areas of expertise who have prepared specific seminars to help equip and inspire you in your writing. Plus, we have a movie night, games night, and talent night that continue to prove popular with our retreat guests. Retreat registrations and payments are due by 20th March 2020. Our Retreat is from Thursday 30th April to Sunday 3rd May 2020. Do join us by registering online: www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2020/. Be blessed as you enjoy our new edition of *The Christian Writer*.

Blessings,
Justin St Vincent

BOOK
TODAY!

NZ CHRISTIAN
writers

RETREAT

APRIL 30TH - MAY 3RD 2020

FLAXMILL RETREAT CENTRE · WHITIANGA



**STACI
MCLEAN**



**KAREN
MCMILLAN**



**EUGENE
MOREAU**



**PHIL
STRONG**

BOOK TODAY AT
www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2020

Editorial: Take Your Writing Seriously

by Kathryn Drinkwater



For years I've juggled my writing schedule around multiple commitments. I've learned to value keeping a regular writing time, temporarily ignoring tasks demanding my attention (for example laundry), minimising distractions, creating a positive writing space and being determined to finish a goal. I've found winning the battle to complete a first draft is satisfaction alone, even before the work is read by anyone else.

There have also been seasons when my writing had to be low on my list of priorities. At those times I had moments of feeling frustrated and inhibited from achieving all the writing goals on my heart. I had to trust God their turn would come.

This year, the Lord willing, 2020 is going to be my most serious writing year yet. Some changes in my circumstances mean I'll be able to focus on writing goals I've had waiting in the wings. I want to get on with it and not allow anything to rob me of this opportunity. I hope to move forward in my writing aspirations and achieve positive results. It's exciting to feel released into this new season.

I believe God wants all who have a passion for writing to take it seriously because written communication is such an important, helpful tool. God communicates to and through people in a variety of ways and each method is vitally important.

The world is full of books, but those not helpful towards God's purposes are like a giant heap of rough, grey rubble stones piled high. Among the pile of stones are books written in obedience to God and for his purposes. They look like shining rocks of solid polished gold glistening among the pile. They are real treasure, have lasting influence and impact the world for good and eternity. You might not personally see the positive impact God's books are having, but you can trust God that they are.

I'd like to encourage you: if you are called by God to write, keep taking it seriously. Fight the battles to complete your goals. Make decisions along the journey to set yourself up in such a way that you're able to make your writing a high priority. Be open to teaching and mentoring others if that's what you're called to do. Let's make 2020 unlike any of the years gone by and together cause ongoing progress for God's Kingdom. Let's write!

*Members: To write letters to the editor or send in writing contributions please email:
editor@nzchristianwriters.org*

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Notices

NZCW Retreat Carpooling and Registrations

For those attending our Writers Retreat in April-May 2020, carpooling options are available. Please communicate with your local writers group leader or Justin at president@nzchristianwriters.org. Retreat registration fees need to be paid by 20th March 2020. Visit our website to book: www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2020/.

Book Reviews:

See page two for details on how to have your book reviewed in *The Christian Writer*.

Hopewriters

For an online community of writers check out www.hopewriters.com. This has been recommended by some of our members.

Poetry Help

Looking for someone with experience in editing and producing poetry books? If so, member poets please reach out to Marie Anticich: marieanticich@gmail.com

Omega Writers Retreat 2020

23-25 October 2020, Australia. Check out www.omegawriters.org and be a part of a conference recommended by many NZCW members who have attended.

Free Offer – Folder of Articles on How to Write

Bartha Hill, who used to be a judge and tutor for NZCW, gave Janice Gillgren a large lever-arch folder of articles pertaining to writing (fiction or non-fiction) that she had meticulously categorised. The articles are particularly suited to anyone writing for publication, and probably about 15 years old on average. Janice would like to pass them on. Please contact Janice Gillgren if you are interested at:

level2@nzchristianwriters.org

Reading for Children. Why bother?

Submitted by Julia Martin with permission from David Hill.

David Hill is a well-known, full-time New Zealand writer who has written some 35 books for children and teenagers. After 30 years he has decided to retire from writing books, and in a recent article in Canvas magazine (September 14, 2019), he gives some interesting insights into the value of reading for young people. Here are some excerpts from his resignation letter:

It's hard to think of a more worthwhile act than getting kids reading. Studies show children who read/are read to, develop brain synapses sooner and more enduringly.

Their fine motor skills are better.

Reading grows intellectual and psychological resources, makes kids more at ease with themselves, brings realisations that hardly any other activity can. Good fiction in particular can show them the complexities that life throws up, the choices that may help people through.

Kids who read stay out of jail. How? Reading gives them words. Words give them the ability to express and clarify themselves to others. Many young males especially end up in strife because they don't have the vocabulary to explain what they're doing, so they lurch from incoherence to frustration to violence.

Reading isn't a solitary activity. Don't worry about your children 'cutting themselves off' when they're deep in a book. Reading helps them make contact with the world, make sense of it and give it shape and coherence. Reading helps young people come to terms with themselves and their issues.

Reading or being read to takes kids deeper. It cuts through superficiality. The slow possession of a story transforms the reader/listener during and after makes him/her gentler, more at ease.

Talk about books with your kids/grandkids. Read to them. Buy them books. Don't worry too much about what they read. The habit comes first; discernment comes later.

Take them to the library. Let them see you reading. You'll help form good future New Zealanders.



Books For Confidence






HOW MANY BOOKS DID YOU READ BEFORE YOU READ THE BIBLE?

Reading God's word is vital for the health and effectiveness of a remote tribal Church.

The Bible is a big book, made up of various genres from a time and culture different from our own.

This requires confident readers.

Confident readers have honed their skills by:

-  Reading **numerous books**
-  Reading books of **varying difficulty**
-  Reading books on **many different subjects**

Ethnos NZ and partners are building a library of practice reading material for tribal Churches under the creative commons copyright and are looking for **volunteer authors and illustrators**.

See the video: www.ethnos.nz/videos#literacy

Interested in contributing towards tribal literacy?



info@ethnos.nz

Press Release from Wild Side Publishing

SMALL, NORTHLAND PUBLISHER LAUNCHES MULTI THOUSAND-DOLLAR WEBSITE TO PROMOTE INSPIRATIONAL CHRISTIAN KIWI AUTHORS

After two years of publishing or distributing 70+ books, Ray and Janet Curle, who operate Wild Side Publishing, Wild Side Ministries and Wild Side Trust out of the small town of Ruawai, have launched a highly sophisticated eCommerce website developed by Henoch Kloosterboer of Creed Creative in Snell's Beach. A unique aspect of the new website is that **20 of the authors** have their own micro-sites embedded inside the website, thus giving them their own platform for written and video blogs.

Several Wild Side Publishing books have been award-winners, or have hit the Top 20 Nielsen Bestseller list; e.g. *When the Crowd Stops Roaring* (Neven MacEwen), *Two Slices of Bread* (Ingrid Coles), *The Wild Side* (Janet Balcombe) and *Journey to the Promised Land* (Dennis R McLeod).

In 2014, Creative Director of Wild Side Publishing, Janet Curle (nee Balcombe), first published her Kiwi memoir from meth addiction to redemption, *The Wild Side*. Since then, many New Zealand authors have asked her how to go about self-publishing and thus Wild Side Publishing was formed after marrying Ray Curle who was a marketing consultant. Janet says one of the most thrilling moments was when Tuhoe 'Bruno' Isaac (ex-Mongrel Mob president) agreed for WSP to distribute and promote his iconic NZ memoir, *True Red*, co-written by Brad Haami. This book has sold over 20,000 copies in New Zealand over the years, and WSP count it a privilege to continue to promote Tuhoe's story of getting out of the gangs and into a life of serving Christ.

Another exciting moment was when they were offered the opportunity to market and distribute Ross Tooley's books a few months ago to benefit his family. Ross served YWAM as a missionary and lecturer for over 50 years and went home to glory in November last year.



Ray and Janet Curle operate Wild Side Publishing in Northland, NZ.

Wild Side Publishing specialises in helping New Zealand authors to self-publish and market their books, and specialise in the true-life, real-story genre. The new website can be found at www.wildsidepublishing.com

WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian Writing of
today and yesteryear-

Series by Frederick Swallow



*Baby Moses found in a reed basket on the
River Nile*

Taku Paipera

The Maori children's Bible.

A great writing achievement.

Carolyn Cox, a New Zealander now of East Sussex, painted 250 characters and vignettes to illustrate the text for *Taku Paipera*, the children's Bible in Te Reo Maori.

Carolyn told *The Christian Writer*, "To be asked by Lion to create in a child's mind full colour painted illustrations for each story and be immersed in the wonder of God's love and faithfulness to his people was a wonderful journey."

Nicely bound. Hardback cover. NZ Bible Society.

NZCW Christchurch Writers Group Shares 25 Years Celebration Cake!

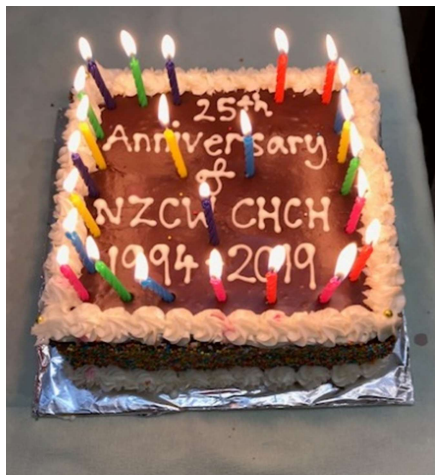


Photo taken by Adeline Hill-Wu and sent into *The Christian Writer* by Dave Palmer.

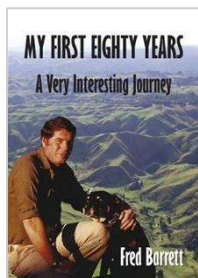
Happy Valentines' Day from the Lord!

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You are loved!



My First Eighty Years – A Very Interesting Journey

By Fred Barrett

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Daystar Books
2019

Readers of Fred's autobiography could be excused for thinking he's had more than one life as he's packed so much into his 'first eighty years'. At one point he lists some 35 different occupations and activities he's been involved in, both in New Zealand and overseas.

By determination and sheer hard work, Fred has been successful in many endeavours, but with honesty and courage, he describes his rollercoaster life of successes and failures.

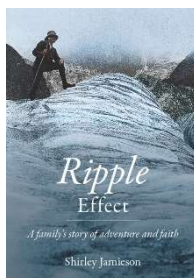
'I have scaled heights and plumbed depths, financially and emotionally. I have lived well, and I have lived on state charity. I have felt on top of the world and have also seen no point in continuing.'

Born in 1939 to a farming family, Fred chronicles changes over the years in technology, the impact of world events such as the Korean War wool boom, and the challenge of fluctuating land and commodity prices.

His life-changing moment came in Tonga when, at age 39, he overcame his disbelief and scepticism and became a true follower of Jesus Christ. He claimed it was the most important contract he'd ever entered into and from that time onwards, has taken every opportunity to introduce people to the only one who gives life meaning and purpose.

Included in his book is a fascinating travelogue describing the many way-out and often dangerous places he and his wife have visited.

I believe this book will have wide appeal and impact. As Fred states: 'This book was written in the hope that someone, somewhere, sometime might benefit from my experience.'



Ripple Effect

A Family's Story of Adventure and Faith

By Shirley Jamieson

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Castle Publishing
Services 2019

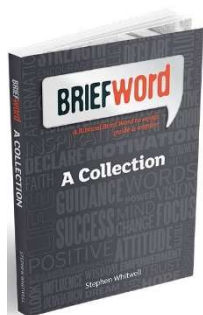
In 1901 at age 17, Archie McMillan left England and everything he knew and loved to share the gospel with the jungle tribes of India. Nothing could have prepared him for the dangers of wild animals, squalid living conditions, deadly diseases, and superstitious beliefs. He married Grace in 1905 and together as pioneer missionaries they worked tirelessly among the Indian people for many years.

When World War I broke out, Archie felt compelled to leave his wife and family in England and go to the battlefields of France where he served with the YMCA as translator and supporter of the Indian soldiers enlisted to fight for Britain.

The McMillans loved India and its diverse people, but when it was no longer safe to stay due to political and civil unrest against the British in the 1920s, they were forced to leave. As one door closed, God opened another and the McMillans moved to Fiji where they worked among the Indian population resident there.

The author scarcely knew her grandparents, but with meticulous research and skilful writing, Shirley has produced a compelling account of the adventures and struggles of pioneering missionaries in a foreign land. From letters and memoirs she has fleshed out the story with delightful anecdotes involving their four children.

The McMillans finally retired in Tauranga and after Grace's death in 1961, Archie revisited his beloved India several times. He was delighted to see the ongoing 'ripple effect' of the seed sown and the blessing of God on that nation.



Brief Word

A Biblical Brief Word to Equip, Guide and Inspire! A Collection.

By Stephen Whitwell

Review by Julia Martin

What started out as short devotional articles written for family and friends, has developed into regular e-letters which go out to people of all walks of life in more than 40 countries of the world.

The author has served as a pastor for more than 30 years, gaining valuable wisdom and experience which he is keen to pass on. His book is a compilation of the first 40 Brief Word articles he has previously written.

Every Brief Word starts with Scripture and from these divinely inspired verses he develops his commentary drawing on his own knowledge and experience along with anecdotes and quotes from other well-known Christians.

In his introduction Stephen writes: 'I believe the Bible. I believe it has the power to transform the human heart, to comfort, encourage, heal, guide, change behaviour, equip for present and future service, and protect us against the enemy's schemes.'

So, if you are seeking quality, Bible-based devotionals that are thought-provoking, challenging and inspiring, then I thoroughly recommend this collection.

Furthermore, you can subscribe to Stephen's ongoing Brief Words and other resources at www.goodwords.nz.

Counting Stars

by Rodney Hickman

Counting stars in an empty sky
Have all my dreams just slipped by?
Blessings come and blessings go
Can I still trust God when its naught
to show

Others seem to get much more
Believing God for what's in store
But I just simply plod along
I wonder where did I go wrong

Will I still trust a God you cannot see
For what's the best for simply me
But here's the thing, we are not alone
Our faith is simply to be grown
Cause those stars out there have
always been
But clouds can obscure what can
be seen

So I'll not give up, keep my hopes alive
His presence then, my dreams revive

Help with Tricky English

by Kathryn Drinkwater

Recently my daughter was learning English composition. I recognised some problem areas I often stumble over when I'm writing. I'm guessing I'm probably not the only one, so I've decided to share some of the helpful tips she and I learned.

What are personal pronouns?

Words used in place of nouns are called pronouns. Instead of writing the following:

The instructor said the instructor would like to explain more clearly some instructions given by the instructor yesterday.

We would replace 'the instructor' with pronouns and write:

The instructor said he would like to explain more clearly some instructions given by him yesterday.

Sometimes writers have trouble deciding which pronouns to use. The pronoun needs to make sense with its original noun whether it's about singular or plural, gender, or person.

Singular or Plural

Singular: *Only one poem was received; it has good rhythm.*

Plural: *Several poems were received; they have good rhythm.*

If two or more singular nouns are used with the word 'and' the pronoun becomes plural.

The teacher is drinking her coffee.

The teacher and the teacher-aide are drinking their coffee.

If 'or' or 'nor' is used instead of 'and', consider each noun separately.

Either Sherri or Jess will need to replace her books.

Neither Sam nor Tim has finished his computer time.

What if using 'or' or 'nor' and one noun is singular and one is plural? The pronoun will be singular or plural depending on the one it's close to.

Neither the driver nor the passengers have arrived at their destination. (plural)

Neither the passengers nor the driver has arrived at his destination. (singular)

Collective Nouns

When more than one person is included in a noun such as 'family' or 'team' it's referred to as a 'collective noun'. Selecting the correct pronoun will indicate whether you are discussing each member of the collective noun or the collective noun as one entity.

The team is planning its uniform. (One entity planning together).

The team are planning their uniforms. (Members are planning individually).

Gender

When should the pronoun be male, female or neutral/neuter? If you know whether the person is he or she and you want your reader to know, obviously you will easily use the correct gender pronoun. But what if you don't know, or you do, but don't want the reader to know?

The English language doesn't have a neuter-gender singular pronoun for people, (unlike an animal which we can refer to as an 'it'), the gender when unknown has historically and traditionally defaulted to masculine. In the Bible 'mankind' or 'man' was accepted as inclusive of male and female so a sentence such as the one following with unknown gender was common if it was neuter.

Usually the veterinarian will send his diagnosis and recommendations with the invoice.

When a writer doesn't wish to risk offence, it is better to change the sentence from singular to plural.

Usually veterinarians will send their diagnosis and recommendations with the invoice.

What about using 'or' or 'nor' and one person is male and one is female?

1. *Neither Stacy nor Carl has written her or his story.*
2. *Neither Carl nor Stacy has written his or her story.*

Use a pronoun that matches its noun in singular or plural, gender and the order it has in the sentence.

1. Stacy first, 'her' first
2. Carl first 'his' first

Collective nouns of people can be treated as a thing.

The company has lost many customers as its reputation has gone downhill.

Which Person?

How do we tell if we are writing in first, second or third person?

First person – the writer is the one speaking, telling the story through their own eyes, the story they are inside of. For example, 'I went to the park.'

Second person – the writer is speaking to someone else, such as in a letter. For example, '*The weather will be great for your visit when you arrive next weekend.*'

Third person – the writer is telling a story about someone else. Not themselves, not the person they're talking directly to, but about a third person or multiple people. For example, '*Mark was driving the bus down the busy road. He pumped the brakes to check they were working.*'

The pronouns we use need to match the 'person' we are writing in. Compare these examples:

To write my poem I began with an idea. (First person).

To write a poem you must begin with an idea. (Second person).

The writer had an idea and began to write his poem. (Third person).

I would like you to help her. (First, second and third!)

We need to decide which 'person' we are going to write in, for what purpose and stay consistent.

Case

Which 'case' is your pronoun? Is it being used as a subject, a possessive or an object?

Subject

The subject is what or who the sentence is about. It is usually the first word or near the beginning of the sentence.

She wrote a book.

It ate some food from the cat dish.

Seven pronouns in English as a subject are:

I, You, She, He, We, It, They.

Object

When the pronoun is an object but not the subject. An object is the word that tells 'what'.

Ann wrote to me.

Will Susan join us?

Seven pronouns in English as an object are:

Me, You, Her, Him, Us, It, Them.

Possessive

What about indicating ownership or the possession of something?

Twelve pronouns in English as possessives are:

My, Mine, Your, Yours, His, Her, Hers, Our, Ours, Its, Their, Theirs.

'My' is used before a noun, as in:

My bag is red.

Mine is used after a noun, as in:

The red bag is mine.

Sometimes a possessive can also be used as a subject, as in:

Mine was a red bag.

Possessive Pronouns do not need an apostrophe because their word form has already changed.

That is our boat on the lake.

The boat on the lake is ours. (Not our's).

Gerunds

A gerund is a verb used as a noun. Gerunds end with 'ing'.

Kirsty appreciated my help. Becomes;

Kirsty appreciated my helping the workers.

A pronoun that is before a gerund will be in possessive case.

My helping not me helping.

Compound Subjects

Should it be 'and I' or 'and me'?

Mum and I will be going to town.

To check, try the sentence without one of the subjects to see if it still sounds right.

Mum will be going to town.

I will be going to town.

Not – *Me will be driving to town.*

Compound Objects

Sarah introduced Max and me.

Sarah wants a photograph for Max and her.

Without the other object will the sentence still sound right?

Sarah introduced me. (not *Sarah introduced I*).

Sarah wants a photograph for her. (not *Sarah wants a photograph for she*).

What about pronouns in comparison?

Sally is slower than I am slow. Becomes, ‘*Sally is slower than I*’

(Not *Sally is slower than me am slow*, or not *Sally is slower than me*).

John can do more paintings than she can do. Becomes, *John can do more paintings than she.*

(Not *John can do more paintings than her can do*. So also not ‘*John can do more paintings than her*’.)

When there is a subject pronoun following a form of ‘to be’ such as was, is, were, and is equal to the subject of the sentence it will look like this:

It was I who wrote the article.

I followed ‘was’ (the form of ‘to be’) and ‘I’ (the subject pronoun) equalled ‘It’ (the subject).

It was I. (Not ‘*It was me*.’) In New Zealand we tend to say ‘me’ a lot, but it’s considered incorrect for writing unless we are giving a character in our story colloquial speech.

It must have been she who took the pen.

It must have been she. It was she.

Who or Whom?

Is it being used as a subject or an object in your sentence? If an object, ‘whom’ is correct.

The writer whom we nominate must own a dictionary.

‘We’ is subject, ‘nominate’ is a verb, ‘whom’ an object.

If a subject, 'who' is correct.

Here are the names of all writers who have been nominated.

'Who' is subject, verb is 'have been nominated'.

That or Which?

The word 'that' can be used when referring to people, creatures or things but only when the topic is so specific the sentence can't exist without it. For example;

The form that was on your desk is now in the bin.

(Specifically, the form on the desk).

These survey forms, which were filled in yesterday, will help us analyse our customer satisfaction rating.

'Which were filled in yesterday', is not essential to the survival of the sentence.
These survey forms will help us...

Therefore, use 'which' when it can be optionally omitted without ruining the sentence.

Vague Words

It's best not to use 'they' unless you've made it clear who 'they' are. 'They' is not to be vaguely used for 'people in general'.

For 'this' and 'that' correct any vagueness by adding a noun.

I've already run five kilometres. This has slowed me down.

I've already run five kilometres. This fatigue has slowed me down.

Choose from the options available. That will help us reach a final total.

Choose from the options available. That price will help us reach a final total.

Himself? Herself?

Use himself or herself for special emphasis:

The Queen herself made the pudding. (As in, no one did it for her).

Use himself or herself to connect an action to the sentence subject.

The rider injured himself tripping over the feed bin.

Not to be used as: *The magazines are for yourself and me.* It should be: *The magazines are for you and me.*

I trust you've enjoyed these writing tips for some tricky English.

Writers Groups

AUCKLAND, ELLERSLIE

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Our local group leaders are available to help connect you to a community of writers in your area. Contact our leaders here to find out more about meeting dates, times and locations:
www.nzchristianwriters.org/groups/

WELCOME

New Members and Renewals:

Glennis Browne

One Tree Point

Jill Clarke

Wanganui

Chris Dixon

Auckland South

Ricolene Gouden

Auckland Central

Terry Hobby

Papakura

Christel Jeffs

Whangarei

C Kjellberg

Verna McFelin

Christchurch

Merlene Midda

Waiuku

Anne Moir Scott

Tairua

Sharon Reynolds

Christchurch

Andrew Russell

Christchurch

Rebecca Shepherd

Hamilton

Deborah Spies

Auckland East

Karen Trethowen

Manurewa

Robert Ward

Upper Hutt

Wei-Shan (Noel)

Yan

Auckland West

New members please remember to email your NZCW website profile-photo and mini bio to Justin at:
president@nzchristianwriters.org

Kiwi Sport Writer Wanted for Christian Today New Zealand

by Mark Tronson – Press Service International

Christian Today New Zealand has available a sport writer spot and invites Kiwi young people to put up their hand. There are 5 sports writers in the Press Service International program in conjunction with Christian Today Australia.

There are five weeks in each cycle and each of those weeks has a sport writer.

Week 1 – Travis Barnes – Melbourne

Week 2 – Jeremy Dover – Melbourne

Week 3 – David Goodwin – Melbourne

Week 4 – Wes Tronson – Gold Coast

Week 5 – Phil Hall – Melbourne



Josh Hinds was a sport writer for ten years and often wrote interesting articles on international sports such as motor racing and US sports such as NFL, Baseball and NBA, before being replaced by Travis Barnes.

Past Kiwi sport writers

There have been three previous Kiwi sport writers:

Brad Mills – Auckland

Annemare de Villiers – Christchurch

Tim Newman – Christchurch

All three have won the annual Tony Dunkerley Sport Writer Award – an award determined by five Panelists who marked the sport articles.

Spot available

Writing sport for Christian Today with a Facebook following of 4.6m around the world is voluntary but it provides a 'byline', name recognition and would add great international flavour to your career CV.

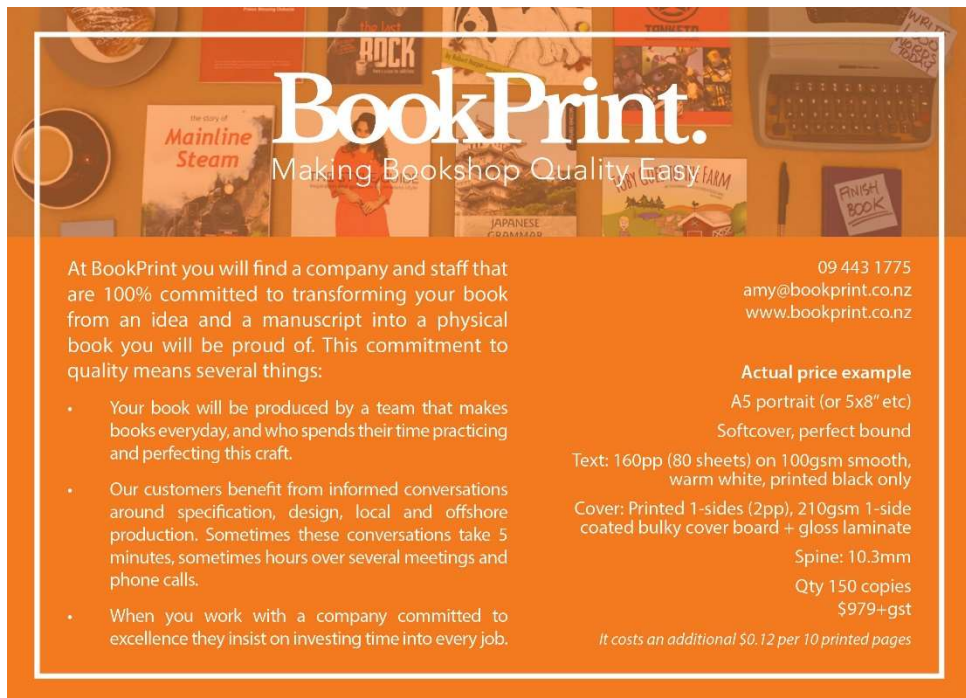
Young Kiwis who are interested are welcome to connect with Dr Mark Tronson – timeout@bushorchestra.com. He would be very pleased to hear from you.



Dr Mark Tronson is a retired Baptist Minister who served as the Australian Cricket Team Chaplain for 17 years, before retiring in 2000, and established Life After Cricket in 2001. He was recognised with the Olympic Ministry Medal in 2009, the medal being presented by Carl Lewis, Olympian of the Century. He mentors young writers, has written 24 books and enjoys writing. He is married to Delma and has four adult children as well as grandchildren. Dr Tronson writes a daily article

for Christian Today Australia (since 2008) and in November 2016 established Christian Today New Zealand. In 2019, Dr Mark Tronson's Press Service International was awarded the Australasian Religious Press Association's premier award, The Gutenberg.

Mark Tronson's archive of articles can be viewed at <http://www.pressserviceinternational.org/mark-tronson.html>



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A New Year of Writing Competitions Has Begun!

Below is our new points board for 2020. All members are welcome to enter our writing competitions. Our judges and magazine readers look forward to reading your entries each competition. This year contestants in levels one and two can compete with the hope of being promoted halfway through the year. In order to be promoted, a contestant needs to achieve a placing at least three times in their level.

Place-getters receive points in each magazine edition. Points earned are: 15 points for first, 12 points for second and 9 points for third. At the end of May 2020 and November 2020 contestants' points in Levels One and Two will be added up and monetary prizes for first, second and third overall will be awarded in each level. Level Three points totals for the year will be tallied at the end of November 2020.

The monetary prize-winners will be announced in our Jun-Jul 2020 and Dec-Jan 2021 editions. Prizes are \$60 for First Place, \$50 for Second Place and \$40 for Third place.

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Ricolene Gouden	15	Jean Crane	15	John Lindsay	15
Jessica Mounter	12	Ruth Jamieson	12	Keith Willis	12
Caroline Cook	9			Jean Shewen	9
Brent Lindsay	9				

The current competitions can be found on page 35 of this magazine. Also, please visit our website www.nzchristianwriters.org and click on the competitions tab to locate a copy of our Competitions Topics Reference Sheet for 2020. This sheet lists the topics for the entire year in each level. It also explains the levels criteria. If you don't already have a copy, please download it for future reference. If you wish to you can allow yourself extra time to write your entries and submit them before each deadline.

Our competitions are of benefit as they provide opportunities for writers to try new tasks. Entrants receive valuable individual feedback from our experienced judges via email. This is a great way to learn and improve your writing craft and receive encouragement.

Keep your entries coming in and watch the list of names on the points board grow! It could be you on the prize winners board in June and/or December 2020! Give each assignment your best effort and have fun!

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Write a short testimony based on your own life story. Make sure your testimony is split into three equal parts of around 115 words each, detailing 1) what your life was like before you became a Christian, 2) how you came to receive Christ into your life and 3) what your life has been like ever since. 350 words maximum.

General Comments

I received 11 good entries to this competition and thank the contestants for sharing their testimonies so openly and honestly. Being candid about who you were and who you are now because of Jesus adds credibility to your story and increases the likelihood of making your reader/listener eager to meet the Saviour too.

While I can only award a First Place, Second Place and two Third Place Equals to four of the entrants to this competition, this does not detract from the quality of the seven other testimonies that were not placed. Apart from losing a few points due to grammar, punctuation and various other errors, or not fully meeting the requirements of the competition, each testimony is an excellent witness to the love, grace and power of God in the lives of the writers and I hope they will be shared often.

Common errors impacting marks and placing of entries include:

1. Exceeding the maximum word count

In simple terms, the definition of 'maximum' is 'no more than'. The word count requirement of this competition was 350 words maximum—meaning the testimony could contain fewer than 350 words but no more than 350 words. Unfortunately, three of the entrants exceeded the maximum word count and lost valuable marks because of it. (NB: Unless stipulated otherwise, titles and footnotes/bibliographies are not included in the word count.)

2. Overuse or incorrect use of commas and semicolons

Putting unnecessary commas before conjunctions such as 'and' was a common error of several entrants. In one instance a semicolon was also incorrectly used. As a conjunction automatically creates a pause when the sentence is read aloud, commas and semicolons are usually no longer required where a conjunction has been used. Exceptions to this rule are long sentences containing more than one conjunction. It would then be appropriate to put a comma before one of the conjunctions. However, with shorter sentences now being the acceptable norm, it would be best to avoid using overly long sentences.

In a couple of instances, commas were used instead of full stops, causing sentences to run together. Please take care to proofread your work to avoid these sorts of errors which can negatively impact readability and/or change the whole meaning of a sentence. Fortunately, this did not happen this time.

3. Capitalising words for emphasis

It is now considered to be old fashioned to emphasise words such as 'salvation' 'pastor' 'priest' etc by starting them with a capital letter. However, if a title is followed by the name of the person, then the title should start with a capital letter; e.g. Father John, Pope Francis.

First Place



Ricolene
Gouden
of Auckland

The name above all names

“Unloved”, “Unfulfilled”, “Unworthy”. These are the names that I resonated with. They may not have been true; but I felt them so strongly at the time. My parents divorced when I was a teenager and I felt like I grew up overnight, as I quickly tried to fill my mother’s big shoes at home when she left. This put a strain on my relationship with my sister. Because my family life wasn’t going well, I looked to all the wrong avenues for fulfilment; boys, alcohol, money. This pursuit left me feeling more lost and resentful. I was a people’s person on the outside but on the inside, I was insecure and craved true happiness.

My mum was a Christian before she married dad and converted to Hinduism. I would visit church whenever we were at my grandparents’ house. Those were my favourite times. Once I felt the Holy Spirit, something changed within me. Even though I wasn’t allowed to go to church, I stopped partaking in our Hindu rituals and only prayed in Jesus’ name. It was only many years later that I took a leap of faith and attended church on my own. The more I attended, the more I grew in my faith. I was on fire for Christ. I felt so alive, as if I wasn’t really living before. I now knew what joy felt like.

“Blessed”, “Anointed”, “Loved”. These are the names that I call myself today! There have been many other competing names that I’ve had to deal with, such as “Demoted”, “Anxious” and “Depressed”. One name stands tall, one name that has always been above these names, the name of “Jesus Christ”. I decided long ago that I would not just attend church but be the church wherever I went, no matter what season I was in. I’ve even had the privilege of being in church leadership. It hasn’t been an easy journey, but I believe what the enemy meant for evil, Christ uses not only for my good, but for the good of those in my world too.

Second Place



Jessica
Mounter
of Rotorua

The Elephant and the Mouse

I cannot tell you what my life would have been like without Jesus. I tried to imagine once that God is not real. Before I did it, I prayed, “God, please be with me while I do

this.” Then irony took over and I gave up. I think that I would have struggled every day without knowing God. I would have lived in fear and loneliness. I’ve struggled with anxiety on and off for most of my life, and I do not know how I would have functioned through that without God to rely on. I only know that in the times when I have spent less time with Him, my anxiety increases, and I can feel very alone.

I think that my grandparents have probably prayed for me daily all my life, and my parents taught me about Jesus from when I was little. I was only three or four years old when I asked Jesus to be my Saviour. I remember waking up one morning, walking into my parents’ bedroom, and telling them that I wanted to ask Jesus into my heart. Even though I was so young and understood so little, God listened to my simple prayer. He did not need me to understand everything. That tiny step of faith was enough, and ever since then He has been a daily part of my life.

The most compelling aspect of knowing God is just how constant and loving He is towards me. He is there even on quiet and dull days when I have to drag myself to open my Bible, or in lonely and scary days when anxiety rears its ugly head. I’m reminded of the story of the mouse and the elephant who went on a swing bridge together. After a few steps the mouse looked up and said, “wow, we are really shaking things up!” I’m that weak, tiny mouse who understands so little, and God is walking with me though everything, shaking things up and never leaving my side.

Third Place Equal



Caroline
Cook
of Auckland

My Life - Redirected

As a child, I loved being part of my grandfather’s congregation when we visited him. He was a champion storyteller, so emotion was tangible in the air as he preached the lesson of the day and it landed with people. Consequently, I have been blessed to know of God, His love for me and the assurance of eternity in heaven with Him, my entire life.

However, the futility of life in this world that was riddled with pain and strife, caused a restlessness and discontent within me. I wanted to fast circuit my departure from this cruel world and my entry into heaven. Death was the doorway that I needed to walk through.

My suicide attempt failed. I felt stuck in this world that I didn’t want to be in.

Life continued after that dark day. When I became a mother, I discovered happiness and purpose that I had never known before. I wanted to be here after all. My faith was still a religious one though.

That all changed one rainy evening at a prayer service.....the Holy Spirit touched me in a tangible way and I felt physically different. I felt so excited that when I got home I continued in prayer and worship into the wee small hours of the morning. I didn't realise it at the time, but that was the moment my religious faith in God shifted dramatically to a dynamic, relationship faith with our living God.

Upon waking the next morning, I had thoughts I had never experienced before. I was looking forward to the future, even excited about the future. I looked forward to being alive in 10, 20, 30 years' time. I knew heaven was still waiting for me, but I was happy to wait for it too.

And here I am writing about this thread in my life's journey many years later – very happy to be alive. I face forwards as I seek the Lord's pathway for me – that He might use me to bless others just as He has blessed me.

Third Place Equal



Brent
Lindsay
of Auckland

My Testimony

In many respects my life before I came to know Christ was uneventful and like most other children growing up in middle-class New Zealand. But with one notable exception. When I was six-years old I was hospitalised for over a year with a rare medical condition. During this time I died and was miraculously brought back to life. I have two ingrained memories from my visit into the next world. Walking down the hallway toward a door bathed in unspeakable light, and God telling me it was not my time and He had things for me to do. From this moment on I have known there was a God. I had met Him.

As I grew up I realised the Church really had nothing to offer. I neglected my faith as nothing seemed to fit with the reality that I had experienced. I could not see Christ in Christianity. By the age of 10 I was trying drugs, become violent and had gotten quite out of control. In sheer desperation I was sent to a Christian camp. And it was here I met Niels Jensen. Unlike so many others, he did not dismiss what had happened and told me the miraculous things God had done for him. Using what had happened he opened the door to the Gospel and the Salvation it offered.

I often struggled with my faith. In 1996, I completed a YWAM DTS. On the Missions Trip God spoke to me. He said four words, "These people need you..." I saw God 'show up.' It was not through others but through me.

On my return, I trained as a teacher and had a successful career. In 2005, my fiancé committed suicide. Nothing can describe that darkness. I tried to hide behind my work but only destroyed my career. In 2016 I got help to try to rebuild my shattered life and I have applied to teach again.

And even now I can still hear God saying He has things for me to do.

Level Two

Judge: Janice Gillgren

Requirement: Rewrite a Bible story into a poem 30 – 36 lines long and suitable for non-Christian children, 10 – 12 years of age. Keep the rhythm and rhyme patterns simple and clear so you can focus on relevance and a meaningful message.

General Comments

Jean Crane's poem 'Loaves and Fishes' easily won first place, as it fills all the criteria. It's easy to read, has a great message, and would be easily understood by most ages, Christian or not. Well done Jean. For second place, 'The Giant Killer' by Ruth Jamieson is also an easily understood poem with a great message. No other places were given.

'Relevance and a meaningful message' (especially for non-Christian children) is subjective and open to interpretation, so the way in which I decided if this criteria was met was to imagine reading the poem to a Bible-in-School class, and asking myself the question: How much explanation would be needed for this poem to make sense and be meaningful to children who have no knowledge of the background story? It is a sad reflection of our times that it should now be assumed that most children of this age will not have a lot of knowledge of Biblical characters that were well known only a generation ago, but we must account for it.

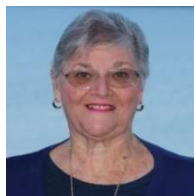
I was disappointed with some entries because my requirements for the competition seemed to be only partly read by their writers, who saw: 'Rewrite a Bible story...into a poem', but skimmed over: 'keep rhythm and rhyme patterns simple and clear so you can focus on relevance and a meaningful message'. Please read all my requirements carefully. Keeping rhythm and rhyme patterns clear means, in effect, that the rhyme doesn't distract from the poem by being cluttered or offbeat, and likewise, the rhyme has a consistent and simple pattern that doesn't draw attention to itself because it flows well. It is worth the effort to achieve this as the message of your poem can then really shine.

Rhyme can be easier to attain than rhythm. However, a discernible rhythm is more important, as it appeals to the musical beat within us all. A poem can do without rhyme, but a poem without some sort of rhythm is chaotic. Rhyme can seem more appealing though, leading to a sacrifice of rhythm for the sake of attaining rhyme. This is also known as forcing the rhythm. Off beats may sound okay to the writer, who unconsciously puts more emphasis on some syllables or words than others to make the poem sound right. However, another reader will trip over those bits. None of us are perfect of course, so neither are our creations, but the work of poetry is in finding just the right words to achieve the chosen beat and be easy to read and meaningful at the same time.

Poetry is a uniquely creative aspect of writing. While it may not be about a personal matter, the creativity involved is an expression of yourself and therefore comments on it (positive or negative) may be taken more personally. This makes judging poetry quite challenging, especially if a subjective aspect is sought, because both meaning and method are studied too. I hope that my comments are taken as encouragement to improve, rather than as harsh criticism.

Line counts, grammar, punctuation and spelling were generally of good standard. A few people had problems with format but explained this to me with their entry. It is better to work on a Word document if you can, but I realise that not everyone has this software.

First Place



Jean
Crane
of Tauranga

Loaves and Fishes

The crowd had come to listen
To what Jesus had to say,
They sat around on grassy mounds
And there they stayed all day.

Then as the evening shadows fell
The sun sank slowly down,
Jesus asked his friends to find
Some food to feed the crowds.

His friends were very worried
Where could the food be found,
To feed the hordes of people
Who were seated on the ground?

Then Andrew found a little boy
With loaves of bread so small,
He also had two fishes
But to Jesus gave them all.

Jesus multiplied the lunch
Into a wondrous feast,
And satisfied the massive crowds
That sat around his feet.

And when they'd finished eating
Twelve baskets did they fill,
With all the food not eaten
By the people on the hill.

God used a humble little boy
Who offered all he had,
And we can do the same as him
And give God what we have.

It is our life God wants the most
To love him every day,
To serve with gifts and follow him
In all we do and say.

But do you say, "What can I give,
My gifts are very small?"
Give them to Jesus they're enough
He'll multiply them all.

Second Place



Ruth Jamieson
of Kawerau

The Giant Killer

Goliath - over nine feet tall -
Stood glaring down, at soldiers all.
His full-clad body, quite a sight,
Daring a man to come and fight.

The Hebrews shook with fear and dread;
None was willing to lose his head.
King Saul did stay inside his tent,
As Goliath, his curses vent.

Young David - just a shepherd boy -
Had sling and stone at his employ.
Sent from home to the battle line,
Found his scared brothers, (they were fine).

He heard Goliath's rant and rage,
As if an actor up on stage.
Surely someone would take him down?
Why, their God was no circus clown!

David knew without any doubt,
He sure could finish off this clout.
With Almighty God on his side,
He clearly wouldn't run and hide.

God had saved him in the past;
This Philistine would be a blast.
He'd rescued lambs from lions and bears -
With God and sling, he had no fears.

The King heard David's fearless words,
But seeing him, thought, 'He's a nerd'.
Dressed in the armour of King Saul,
David knew he would trip and fall.

With names Goliath taunted him -
"A lad! A dog!" It was a din.
With one stone and his trusty sling,
He ran to giant and let swing.

His God did guide that stone just right -
Goliath fell; he'd lost his height.
Though a boy, a giant he slew,
Because the living God he knew.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: Choose a psalm (or part of a psalm) from the Bible. Discuss its meaning and say how it has challenged or encouraged your Christian faith. 250 words maximum.

General Comments

The Book of Psalms is a collection of 150 Hebrew songs and poems and is one of the most frequently read and quoted books of the Bible.

Written by several different authors (the majority by David) over a time span of 1000 years, the psalms are still relevant to our lives today because they express the timeless heart and soul of humanity.

In the psalms we discover the full gamut of human emotions and experiences – from ecstatic praise, worship and thanksgiving to lament, doubt and despair.

Whether despairing or rejoicing, the psalmists share their honest feelings with God. As a result, men and women down through the ages have identified with the writers as they discover God's grace and presence sufficient to meet their every need.

What a legacy the psalmists have left behind because they took the time to write down their thoughts and experiences. The psalms are a cogent reminder to us as Christian writers of the power and permanency of the printed word and should encourage us to keep writing and sharing our Christian faith and experience. Who knows the effect our writing may have on someone now or in the future?

This assignment was straightforward. The limiting factor was the small word count. With only 250 words available to explain the meaning of the chosen psalm (or part of it), and then give comments on how it has challenged or encouraged your Christian faith, every word must count. This demands clear and concise writing with a logical flow.

My requirements were similar to those for the devotionals in December's competition.

Choose an interesting title and write an arresting introduction.

Quote the psalm number (or part thereof) and give a brief explanation of its meaning.

Give your personal application.

Round it off with a convincing conclusion.

Each of the four entries I received covered most of the above points adequately and with few mistakes.

I awarded John Lindsay first place, closely followed by Keith Willis in second place, and Jean Shewan in third place.

First Place



John
Lindsay
of Christchurch

Look At It Another Way

We know, in theory, that we never see the whole picture. Only God knows everything but we are easily persuaded that our view tells the full story.

This is what hits me when I read Psalm 73 where the writer questions the value of remaining faithful to God as he observes the apparent success of those who care only for themselves.

'I envied the proud when I saw them prosper' (1), he writes, 'These fat cats have everything their hearts could wish for!' (2)

The success of those who turn their back on God is so enticing that this faithful poet asks 'Did I keep my heart pure for nothing?' (3)

Eventually, as he continues to ponder why the wicked prosper, he goes into the sanctuary of God. There he discovers another viewpoint and learns where the paths of the faithful and the ungodly lead.

Those who reject God are on a slippery path to destruction while those who trust God have a glorious destiny with the promise of divine guidance along the way.

Psalms 73 encourages me because I am easily seduced by messages that urge me to put myself first. There is no end of schemes for getting rich faster, restoring my long-gone youth or indulging myself in leisure and comfort.

I am challenged to look at my world from that other perspective, the one I get when I join the psalmist in the sanctuary of God.

There I see most clearly where today's choices will take me.

Quotations from the New Living Translation. (1) Psalm 73:3, (2) Psalm 73:7, (3) Psalm 73:1

Second Place



Keith
Willis

of
Kaukapakapa

Be still and know that I am God

There are 150 Psalms in the Bible made up of many thousands of verses but there is just one that is special for me. Ps 46: 10. "Be still and know that I am God."

I used to have many of the characteristics of a type A person resulting, maybe inevitably, in a heart attack. It was then that I became aware of this remarkable instruction from God. An instruction that is more healing than any prescription from a doctor.

"Be still." Meaning cease all activity. Physically that can be a challenge for an active farmer. Mentally it is near impossible. Our minds constantly flit from one thing to another like a butterfly. However, with practice, it is possible to keep our minds still enough to concentrate exclusively on God, even if only briefly.

"Be still and know." This is not referring to head knowledge. It is deep heart knowledge based on experience. Knowledge that God has revealed to us that he, the infinite power behind all of creation, is lovingly directing our lives. As Paul wrote in Romans 8: 28, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Life can seem like a storm raging around us but, as we meditate on this verse, we become aware that we are in the safety and calm of the eye of the storm.

Could Ps 46: 10 be the reason I haven't suffered a second heart attack?

Third Place



Jean
Shewen
of
Christchurch

A Place to Worship

'I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the Lord's house" And now we are here, standing inside the gates of Jerusalem'. Psalm 122:1-2

On November 3rd, we held the last service in our church building, before it was sold and demolished.

I have been worshipping there for thirty-five years, and have many memories of special services, beautiful people and enjoyable social occasions. It was an emotional time. Then we faced a big transition - to the hall of the integrated Church school attached to our parish. I've been surprised and pleased with the experiences of a different environment for worship. It is not the place, but the Lord's presence and the church family that are important.

In Deuteronomy, one of God's instructions to Joshua was to choose a place in the new land to be the central place of worship for all the people. In this psalm, David explains how the temple at the chosen place, Jerusalem, has been rebuilt, giving thanks for its restoration. He prays that it will continue to be the place the people gather for worship, and that they will find peace and safety there. (Verses 6-9)

So we, like the Israelites, have become a displaced people. But we are fortunate because by 2022, the other church in our parish, badly damaged in the 2011 earthquake, will be repaired and refurbished – and we will go home. Meantime, we are freed up to put our energies into the real work of the Gospel, in mission and outreach in our community. As I give thanks for the many blessings we have received, I remember those who have no physical or spiritual home, and pray that they will find both.

Competitions for April 2020

Due by March 1st

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 what level you're on, email Debbie McDermott at:
level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Entries are judged on: Entering, format and layout 15%, Topic requirements 25%, Creativity, flow and impact 25%, Grammar and punctuation 25%, Spelling 10%.

Level One—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Using a traditional rhythm and rhyming style, write a poem about the full Easter story (i.e. the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ). Length: 30 lines maximum.

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at **level1@nzchristianwriters.org**



Debbie

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write a letter to your region's MP about a current moral or ethical issue. Be respectful but clear about your views. Include no more than two Bible verse selections, using a modern translation. 200 – 250 words.

Email entry to Janice Gillgren at **level2@nzchristianwriters.org**



Janice

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: You've been chosen to represent New Zealand at a world forum. You have five minutes to promote the desirability of living in our country. Write your speech in 500 words or less.

Email entry to Julia Martin at **level3@nzchristianwriters.org**



Julia



NZ CHRISTIAN WRITERS is a nationwide collective of authors, bloggers, editors, lyricists, poets, publishers, songwriters, storytellers and writers throughout New Zealand. Along with our bi-monthly magazines and competitions we offer inspiring seminars and writers retreats to encourage, inspire and upskill people in their writing.

NZ Christian Writers' vision is to cultivate a vibrant community of Christian writers by connecting them to other like-minded writers in New Zealand. We welcome both beginner and experienced writers.