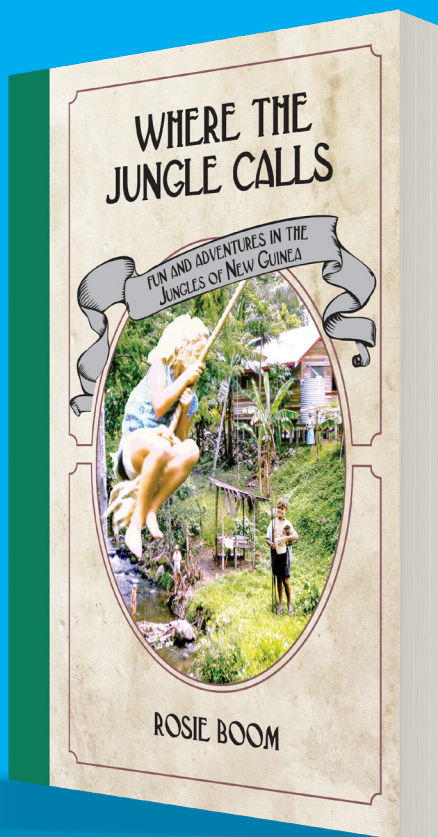


DECEMBER 2019 - JANUARY 2020

THE CHRISTIAN Writer



BOOK REVIEW

Where the Jungle Calls

BY ROSIE BOOM

SEE INSIDE FOR

Competitions
New Members
& Latest News



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.*

President: Justin St Vincent: president@nzchristianwriters.org

Editor: Kathryn Drinkwater: editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Debbie Smith

For subscriptions and address changes: treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org

Annual Subscriptions—2 options:

1) Digital magazine: Full membership \$40 / Student membership \$20

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Pay subs by direct credit or online banking to NZ Christian Writers, a/c 12 3040 0547346 00

Cheques can be posted to Debbie Smith, Treasurer, NZ Christian Writers, PO Box 34400 Birkenhead, Auckland 0746

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 Notices
Page 6	Editorial – Kathryn Drinkwater
Page 7	Wanted by Ethnos NZ: Writers and Illustrators
Page 8	Famous Writer Coming to Omega Conference by Iola Goulton
Page 9	For Sale: Second Hand Books on Writing Topics
Page 10	Writing Briefs: Frances J Crosby – Frederick Swallow
Page 10	Eulogy – Joyce Hawkins by Janice Gillgren \ Wellington Group Photo
Page 11	Featured Review: Where the Jungle Calls – Rosie Boom
Page 11	Book Review: From Despair to Hope – Sara-Jane McGuire
Page 11	Book Review: One Minute Gospel – Adeline Hill
Page 12	Book Review: Kiwi on the Camino – Vivianne Flintoff
Page 12	Book Review: The Invisible Caravan – Janet Pointon
Page 13	Book Review: Voices in Apartheid – Felicity Visser
Page 13	Book Review: Butterfly People – Vanessa Wilkinson
Page 14	Writers Groups Details \ Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 15	Professional Writing Services \ Writers Groups' Anniversaries
Page 16	A Different Christmas by R Hickman \ Creation Week by J Martin
Page 17	Christian Santa Christmas by Kathryn Drinkwater
Page 18	Lexophile & Paraprosdokians – Adeline Hill \ Poetry by Rod Hickman
Page 19	Competition Winners and Promotions!

CW Competitions

Page 20	Level One Results	Page 26	Level Three Results
Page 24	Level Two Results	Page 31	Competitions for October 2019

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 December-January 2020 edition features a book from Rosie Boom, *Where the Jungle Calls*. This is a brand-new instalment of *The Barn Chronicles* where

Rosie recounts the fun and adventures of her family in the jungles of New Guinea. Her book is now available and would make a wonderful Christmas present for family and friends. Book orders are available from www.rosieboom.com.

As we step into 2020, NZ Christian Writers will see some additional benefits emerging for our members. Firstly, our magazine editor Kathryn has prepared a NZCW Members' Books Catalogue making it easier than ever to discover and buy books from our 200+ growing collective nationwide. In addition, our board are enthused by a new initiative we will be launching to have a new magazine to attract and engage members in the 10 – 20 age range which will be called *Young Christian Writer*. We encourage current members to share these special edition magazines with younger Christian writers in your church and community.

Another initiative we are currently developing is a mentorship model for NZ Christian Writers. Our membership has a wealth of writing and publishing experience represented within our collective. We will be establishing a specific programme where experienced writers can help encourage and share their knowledge with emerging writers. Imagine mentoring the next John Bunyan, C S Lewis, Oswald Chambers, A W Tozer, or J R R Tolkien. I believe NZ Christian Writers has the God-given potential to equip and release emerging writers who love Jesus and are passionate about seeing his Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven. If this inspires you, please email me at president@nzchristianwriters.org

Our Retreat 2020 has already received keen interest from many of our members. Inspirational keynote speakers will be Staci McLean, Karen McMillan, Eugene Moreau and Phil Strong. Each of them will bring two special seminar sessions. Do join us at our Retreat 2020 at the fantastic Flaxmill Retreat Centre, Whitianga, from Thursday 30th April to Sunday 3rd May 2020. As always, non-member friends and family are welcome to attend. All details and registrations are available online. Do register your interest and book today: www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2020/

All the best for a fantastic Christmas and New Year season.

Blessings,
Justin St Vincent



Notices

NZCW Retreat Carpooling

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 as soon as possible. Visit our website to book: www.nzchristianwriters.org.

2020 Change for NZCW Competitions Entry Deadline

Next year we plan to have the printed copy of our magazine in the post at the beginning of its due month. To achieve this, we have changed the NZCW Competition Entry Deadline to the 1st of the month prior to magazine publication.

Book Reviews:

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

Hopewriters

For an online community of writers check out www.hopewriters.com, it 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 Goldcoast, Australia. Check out www.omegawriters.org and see our article on page eight.

Editorial: A Time to Reflect and Live

by Kathryn Drinkwater



Happy summer season! December and January are often a time to reflect on the year that's been and evaluate how far we've come along in our writing goals. The new year brings a sense of new beginnings and a fresh start. Sometimes we need to realign our goals with reality or identify what we can change in order to achieve what we want to write during the coming year. It's also a lovely time for family, friends and making memories.

I encourage you to spend time out of the writing space and enjoy yourself by trying something you've never done before. In order to write about life, we need to get out and live it. One of the blocks that often stops someone from writing is they feel they have nothing to write about. Usually that's not true, as we all have something unique which we can bring to the writers' pool, but sometimes we need to experience things before we can authentically write about them.

At the book launch of my first children's novel, *Dog Tucker*, one person commented, 'It's great you've had your book published – if only you'd written it years earlier when you were younger.' My reply was, 'I had to live it first!' It doesn't matter how old you are as a writer. If you're young – write from your life experiences. If you're older, write from your life experiences! If you don't have much life experience, get out and do something different and fun.

I've been thoroughly enjoying my new experience of being NZCW's magazine editor and I'm excited to see what the new year will bring for us all. I'm looking forward to creating and promoting our new magazine for students, the *Young Christian Writer* and seeing what God does through it in their lives. Please pray it will help produce much good fruit in the lives of many.

As well as reaching and supporting young Christian writers, it's important to remember the Body of Christ includes people from all nations, tribes and tongues. For NZCW I believe God wants us to invite new NZ members from every language and culture. He wants his Word to reach every tribe and tongue. For members who have come from other countries, they can use their writing gift to reach back into those countries and help make a positive difference. All our members can seize opportunities, such as what Ethnos NZ are offering (see page 7), to write for other cultures and boost their reading skills. Our goals can be global as well as local. I encourage everyone to think big and our work will become far-reaching. *The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness of it, the world and they who dwell in it. Psalm 24:1*

Love and blessings to you all in our Lord Jesus Christ.

(You are invited to write letters to the editor at editor@nzchristianwriters.org)






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

Famous Fiction Writer Coming to Omega Writers Conference Retreat 2020

by Iola Goulton

Attention: Fiction Writers. Want an opportunity to learn from a best-selling award-winning Christian fiction author? Then start saving for the 2020 Omega Writers Conference, featuring keynote speaker Susan May Warren.

Susan May Warren is the RITA and Carol-award winning author of over thirty novels. She's written contemporary romance, romantic suspense, historical fiction, as well as craft books such as *The Story Equation*. She is the founder and owner of Learn How to Write A Novel (<https://learnhowtowriteanovel.com/>, previously known as My Book Therapy). This online writing community has launched the publishing careers of many Christian fiction authors, including Australian debut author Jessica Kate (who has a three-book contract with Thomas Nelson, an imprint of Harper Collins Christian Publishing).

The conference will be held from 23 to 25 October 2020 (Labour Weekend), at the Peppers Kingscliff Resort (<https://www.mantrahotels.com/peppers-salt-resort-and-spa/>). Attendees can stay onsite at the Mantra next door, or find other local accommodation. There will be bus transfers from Gold Coast Airport and attendees are welcome to stay an extra night or two before or after the conference at the conference room rates (2018 rates are on offer).

Registrations will open in March 2020, but attendees can book their conference accommodation now using the booking form available in the Facebook group: Omega Writers Conference: Kingscliff 2020 visit: (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2513162132286313/>). Further details will be available through the Facebook group or on the Omega Writers website at www.omegawriters.org as they become available.

Omega Writers is an Australasian writing organisation for Christian writers. Omega organises the annual CALEB Awards for Christian books by authors from Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. Previous CALEB winners include NZCW members Rosie Boom and Jen Gibbs, and several members have been involved in judging the awards.

I've attended and spoken at several previous Omega conferences and have had the opportunity to learn from some wonderful writing instructors, including David Rawlings, an Australian Christy Award finalist, bestselling Christian indie author Hallee Bridgeman, writing instructor Margie Lawson and US Christian literary agent Steve Laube. I've also met several NZCW members there, including Rosie Boom, Valmai Redhead and Janice Gillgren. It's always a great time of learning and fellowship, and I definitely recommend attending.

For Sale: Second Hand Books on Writing

\$10 each plus \$2 postage and packaging



To purchase please contact Denis at kiwidenis@gmail.com

These are some of the books which helped Denis Shuker become a best-selling author so be quick to grab a bargain!

WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian Writing of
today and yesteryear-

Series by Frederick Swallow



Frances J Crosby **Known as Fanny Crosby**

In her life of song and music she penned over 8,000 gospel hymns including a *Christmas carol.

Born 1823 in New York, Frances at only six weeks old lost her sight through unskilled care. She served in the then sordid New York Bowery district referring to the occupants as 'My Boys'.

Her *Blessed assurance* was widely sung at Billy Graham Crusades. When talking to children she included wit and humour. Fanny Crosby at 95 joined heavens' choirs.

*In a lonely manger sleeping
Calm and still a child we see.
Tis the Holy child of promise
Light of all the world is He.

Tune: Lamb of God our souls adore Thee.

Eulogy **Joyce Hawkins**

by Janice Gillgren

Joyce Hawkins was a much-loved and valued member of the Northland Christian Writers group since 1997, and a NZCW member for many years. She died peacefully in mid-October.

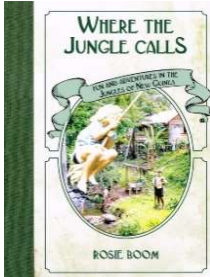
Joyce was 91 years old, healthy and happy. She loved literature, valued generosity and thankfulness, and was a dear friend to many, including myself. She was also the loved grandmother of ten and great grandmother of seven.

She never quite finished her life story, though, so I hope her family will complete and print it as it was written for them.

New Writers Group **in Wellington**



The new NZCW Wellington Group is co-hosted by Paul Devereux and Sarah Richards. This photo was taken at Hope Centre. From left: Nigel, Paul, Lorna, Josephine and Perise.



Where the Jungle Calls

By Rosie Boom

Review by Kathryn Drinkwater

Published by Boom Tree Publishing 2019

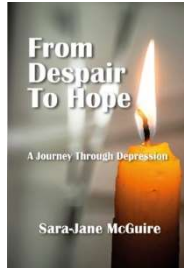
This is a true-life story written for boys and girls who will quickly connect with and be enthralled by the adventures, dangers and mischief found within. It's taken from three years of the author's childhood and is written in the voice of Rose the child sharing experiences as they happen.

For those who have experienced the jungles of Papua New Guinea this book will take you back. Sharing Rose's family adventure is a chance to gain something extra special. Rosie writes in such a way that it's as if you are there in the jungle with her.

Crocodiles, snakes and butterflies are just a few of the creatures that feature. There are laugh out loud moments and 'gras bilong ai' (eyebrow) raising incidents. Discover what Rose catches in her net, the unique skill of an organist and what some teachers surprisingly wear on their feet in a jungle classroom.

Rose's family demonstrate courage in the face of difficulties. There are examples of great parenting by Rose's parents as they make difficult decisions. Rose and her siblings' reluctance to leave their jungle home is a great reminder that children don't need technology to be happy. However, they do need books!

If you've read any of Rosie Boom's previously published set of books, *The Barn Chronicles*, you will discover this is a delightful addition to that library.



From Despair to Hope

A Journey Through Depression

By Sara-Jane McGuire

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Daystar Books 2019

Growing up Sara-Jane suffered from low self-esteem, shyness, bullying and fear. Discouragement and disappointment with relationships in her work and home situations, compounded her problems and led to depression and despair.

In 2005 she became a Christian, and with God's help and the support of good friends and counsellors, Sara-Jane's life is now in recovery and she can face each day with optimism, confidence and hope. She writes: "Every single person who suffers from despair or discouragement deserves to know the fullness of joy, love, and hope that is found in Jesus, as well as the plans and purposes that God has for them."

This is Sara-Jane's first book and with her new-found passion for writing, I think we can expect more books to follow.



One Minute Gospel

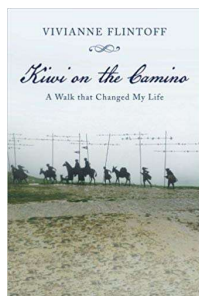
Leaflet

By Adeline Hill

Review by Julia Martin

Adeline1232010@gmail.com

In an attractive 'One Minute Gospel' leaflet, Adeline Hill outlines the good news of Jesus Christ and the steps to take to become a child of God. She backs up her statements with appropriate verses of scripture. This leaflet is a useful resource to aid personal witnessing and Christian outreach ministries.



Kiwi on the Camino

A Walk that Changed My Life

By Vivianne Flintoff

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Balboa Press
2017

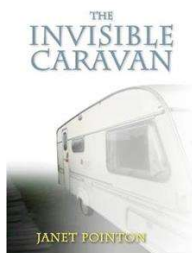
Not many of us will have the opportunity or inclination to attempt the ancient pilgrimage known as Camino de Santiago, stretching 900kms from the French Pyrenees to Santiago in Northwest Spain.

Dating back to the ninth century with the discovery of St James's remains, this gruelling walk attracts thousands of modern day pilgrims each year from many different nationalities – including New Zealanders, Vivianne and Bruce Flintoff.

Vivianne was encouraged to write this book based on the comprehensive and meticulous blogs she recorded during the seven week journey. Each chapter outlines the experiences of a single day – the sights, landmarks, local people and fellow travellers they met; along with the challenges of foot problems, inclement weather, language barriers, and often primitive facilities and accommodation.

Unlike the Flintoffs, many travellers fail to receive their Compostela certificates of completion because they set deadlines rather than negotiable targets for the walk. Besides being a physical and mental challenge, the Camino is a deeply spiritual and life-changing experience. Vivianne writes: 'My Camino and pilgrimage is about letting go and becoming'. Back home she outlines the changes the Pilgrimage has made to her life style.

For those of us unable to achieve this amazing feat, I believe reading Vivianne's excellent travel journal is the next best thing!



The Invisible Caravan

By Janet Pointon

Review by Debbie McDermott

Published by DayStar Books.
2019

The Invisible Caravan is a page-turning book that held my attention from start to finish. Apart from being jam-packed with mystery and adventure, the story is interwoven with analogies that highlight key biblical truths and characters. Although these analogies may not be evident to non-Christian readers, the perfect world Sam enters when Jon, Jake and Zoe invite him into the caravan is clearly a picture of heaven and its King (whose voice Sam hears several times) is a picture of God.

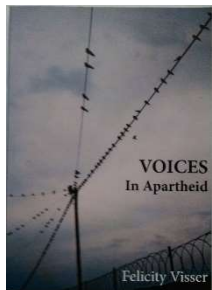
Then there are also the Nix whose job it is to 'steal, kill and destroy everything'. There is no second guessing as to who they represent! The problem is they look just like everyone else and Sam has some bad experiences before he starts to recognise them.

As Sam becomes more familiar with the King and his new friends, he learns about the importance of being honest, open, truthful, forgiving and obedient; of calling for help when he needs it; and of not allowing fear to get the better of him. When Sam starts applying these principles to his life, he begins to be transformed into a happier, more confident boy.

The story culminates in New Zealand where Sam finally meets the King and discovers what it means to be specifically chosen. This, for me, was the highlight of the story.

The Invisible Caravan is an excellent read that will appeal to both teens and adults.

Book Review



VOICES In Apartheid

By Felicity Visser

Review by Pamela Lowrey

Self Published in 2018

Persevering and constantly sowing seeds of hope. That would be the legacy of Felicity Visser. She learnt the secret that 'people who travel with God never travel alone'. This has been the mainstay of her daily walk.

Felicity was born in Pretoria, South Africa and as a child growing up encountered the ugliness of apartheid and its ramifications in daily life.

Her book is a fascinating account of her world as she saw it and is packed with short stories, anecdotes and entries from her diary. She opens up her life and invites the reader to share in her hardships, challenges, joys and sorrows. When she was suddenly widowed, Felicity was devastated but moved on. She followed a vision of compassion which she has consistently held on to against all odds as an accomplished author, a talented artist, poet and intrepid adventurer.

Like a jigsaw puzzle each chapter is made up of a series of events and each piece is gradually placed until the picture is complete. A unique and different voice precedes each chapter, the first one being Early Voices. Each voice concentrates on a different season of Felicity's life.

Her story demonstrates that amazing things can happen when an individual is willing to give over their life totally to God.

Book Review



Butterfly People

By Vanessa Wilkinson

Review by Julia Martin

Self-Published 2019

Self-published in 2019, Vanessa's book is about an ordinary New Zealand family facing the usual dynamics and challenges of interrelationships.

Running parallel to this main narrative is a mystical story from a book one of the characters is reading.

It concerns a Cherokee Indian man who has been exiled from his community for becoming a Christian. He discovers and falls in love with a fairy princess from the Butterfly People who live in a distant city in space named Opaldon where the forces of good and evil compete. Alistair shares his faith with Natasha and she becomes a believer.

Readers will be able to draw their own conclusions as to how these stories are related.

The author shows creativity in her writing and illustrations, but I suggest more editing is needed and the use of a larger font.

Vanessa has also self-published and illustrated a book of poems entitled 'Paua Sky' 2017.

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to our NZCW team for 2019: to all who have assisted with producing and sending out *The Christian Writer* magazine, book reviewers, writers group leaders, contributing writers, Board members, competition judges and seminar speakers. Bless you all!

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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:

Denise Bekker

Havelock North

Margery Bramwell

Hamilton

Debbie Bright

Hamilton

Ray Burton

Hastings

Mary Crosson

Dunedin

Robin Cox

Red Beach

Ian Gemmill

Wellington

Bruce Gilbert

Waikato

Michael Hardcastle

Auckland West

Ronald Hubbard

Levin

Lyn Isaac

Dunedin

Denise James

Tauranga

Albert Kwok

Auckland East

Valerie Lather

Christchurch

Sharon Lucas

Auckland North

PM McLuskie

Christchurch

Adam Millen

Auckland Central

Jessica Mounter

Rotorua

Nina Peck

Manawatu

Angela Penteado

Auckland West

Karalyn Reid (Joyce)

South Canterbury

Monique Rowe

Auckland East

Lynn Scott

Auckland East

Andrew Stroud

Hamilton

Tanya Unkovich

Auckland Central

Imelda Wood

Wairarapa

New members please remember to email your NZCW website profile-photo and mini bio to Justin at:
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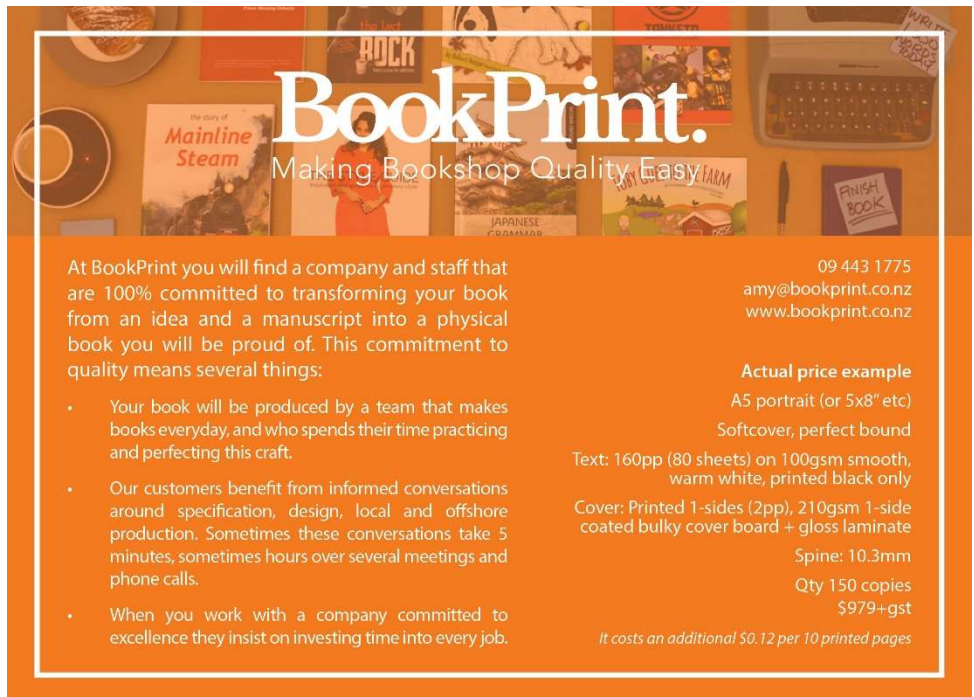
Candice Hume

E: info@astuteediting.co.nz

Congratulations Writers Groups!

Our Christchurch Writers group will celebrate 25 years in December 2019. The group began on Dec 31, 1994 at Lois Fechney's home. Others who attended were Dave Palmer, Beth Walker, Donna Wright and Elspeth Oliver. Over the years many more have participated including Janette Busch who joined in 1999 and John Lindsay in 2002. Well done everybody!

Our Northland Writers group reached 30 years in April 2019. It began in 1989 and some of the earliest members included George Bryant, Janice Gillgren, Ruth Linton and Janet Fleming. It has recently enlarged into two groups, Kerikeri and Whangarei. Awesome work!



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It costs an additional \$0.12 per 10 printed pages

A Different Christmas

by Rodney Hickman

What would you say if Jesus was born last year
Not in Israel but in a street near here
Born in the back seat of an abandoned car
His parents refugees from a country far
And yet his purpose for coming is still the same
To redeem mankind from all misery and pain

Is our image of him just some sentimental thought
That Christmas is more about the gifts we bought
Can he still have a place in our hearts today
Will we take the time to worship, kneel and pray
Religion informs us, and tells us all about him
But to know him personally, now that's a better thing.

Remember :~ He is the reason for the season.

Creation week

by Julia Martin

In the beginning God created
The universe in all its splendour
By the word of his mouth
He brought forth light, dispelling the darkness
And filled the emptiness with land, sea and sky
On day three God clothed the earth
With trees, plants and flowers bearing seeds of their kind
Day, night and seasons became governed by lights
A sun and a moon and galaxies of stars
The birds of the air and the fish in the sea
Sprang into life and were grouped in their kinds
In colours and textures with stunning designs
The sixth day brought animals, wild and domestic
Fully developed both massive and minuscule
The stage was now set for God's ultimate plan
Made in his likeness – a woman and man
Able to reason, create and commune
To care for creation, be fruitful and rule
His work now completed, God saw it was good
On the seventh day he rested and blessed all he'd made.

Christian Santa Christian Christmas

It's Christmas time again
The kids are getting excited
Presents and Christmas lunch
Lots of people invited
Christmas time for me
Has many special parts
First it rep's Christ's birthday
We love Him with all our hearts

Next it is family time
When loved ones gather together
Creating good memories
Which will be cherished forever
It's a chance to show kindness
Generosity and thought
When giving someone a gift
Homemade or shop-bought

I know there's negativity
About how traditions started
Or that it's commercialised
People and money parted
But the way I like to see it
Is fun and creativity
If someone's income is boosted
I'm happy for them you see

Some symbols have started wrong
But their meaning has now changed
I've decided what they mean to me
New celebrations claimed
I'm grateful for each Christmas
For memories of loved ones gone
For the pleasure it brings children
And I'll keep the festivity on

But what about Saint Nick?
You may ask me about him
From what I've read online
Holy Spirit filled to the brim!
Not only was he generous
Not only was he kind
But he was a full-on Christian
Who lived with Jesus in mind

He prayed and saw miracles
He was like Peter or Paul
God allowed him to be remembered
For his good works is all
What seemed like magic to some
Was God's power at hand
Shining through a joy-filled man
Spreading hope through the land

If Saint Nicholas came here
To speak to us today
He'd point us all to Jesus
"Honour God," he would say
The one thing I won't do
Is lie to kids Santa's alive
I say it's a game parents like
To pretend how presents arrive

I want kids to know the truth
Not disappointing deception
They need to know God loves them
Each one without exception
I don't want them to wonder
That if Santa is all fake
Maybe Jesus Christ is too
That would be a mistake

Santa won't get our letter
But Jesus will hear our prayer
We won't see a flying sleigh
But once more Jesus will appear
The Gospel is reliable
Saint Nicholas knew it too
Christmas is about love and giving
To God we need to be true

So best of all is Christ's birth
That darling baby born
To be our Lord and Saviour
Let's blow the celebration horn!

by Kathryn Drinkwater

What is Lexophile & Paraprosdokians?

A lexophile is someone who has a love for words and their meanings and a lexophile phrase is a saying-phrase that makes clever use of common words.

Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!

A cartoonist was found dead in his home. Details are sketchy.

He used to be a banker, but then he lost interest.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

She tried to catch some fog, but she mist.

They told Alice she had type-A blood, but it was a Typo.

Sam changed his iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

Paraprosdokians are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising and unexpected; frequently humorous.

Where there's a will, I want to be in it.

Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

People never really grow up, they only learn how to act in public.

War does not determine who is right – only who is left.

She didn't say it was your fault, she said she was blaming you.

In filling out an application, where it says, 'In case of Emergency, Notify: "I put 'DOCTOR'.

Ref: Keeping On Vol 103: Spring 2019 - Sent in by Adeline Hill

WANTED, Dead or Alive!

It's 1784 and I'm on the run
Staring down the barrel of a lawman's gun
I robbed a bank cause I'm a poor man's son
Then stole some horses just for the fun

I drank whisky and stole a man's wife
Now my troubles have got me in strife
The law has a bounty to end my life
At the end of a rope, a bullet or a knife

You can run but there's nowhere to hide
Lost and lonely is how you are inside
To be a better man I had never tried
I'm heading for a fall and its all my pride

In a country church I met the preacher
He's nothing more than a Sunday school teacher
Forgiveness by God was his main feature
Redemption available for me: Gods creature

So there in that church I knelt by the altar
Confessed all my sins, I did not falter
I handed in my rifle, guns and holster
I'll pay for my crimes, no longer a bolter.

Christchurch Tragedy 2019

15th March and New Zealand mourn
A terrorist attack, our culture torn
Fifty people killed in a Christchurch mosque
The country in shock, how do we count that cost?

It's a horror story we thought would never be
The dead and the dying, too graphic to see
Now the community at large rally support
To aid and assist the victims, as we ought

Churches across the country have opened their doors
Given money and flowers to help aid the cause
"God defend New Zealand," is our anthems cry
"We are a peace loving country," our motto held high

We thought we were immune from anger and hate
But we are jolted to reality, and we have to state
That 9/11 has finally hit our shore
Please pray harmony and peace, be restored once more.

Poems by Rodney Hickman

Competition Winners and Promotions!

Our website competitions page has a copy of next year's Competitions Topics Reference Sheet. This sheet lets you know the topics for the entire year in each level. It also helps you understand which level you are in. If you don't have a copy, please download and save it so at any time during 2020 you can submit an entry. Our competitions provide opportunities for writers to try new tasks and receive valuable individual feedback from our judges.

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

The monetary prizes are \$60 for First Place, \$50 for Second Place and \$40 for Third place. Entries are judged on: Entering, format and layout 15%, Topic requirements 25%, Creativity, flow and impact 25%, Grammar and punctuation 25%, Spelling 10%.

Below is our final points board for 2019. Congratulations to our prize winners! All the points for members now go back to zero to begin 2020 afresh. Congratulations also to the contestants who have been promoted to the next level. In order to be promoted, a contestant needs to achieve a placing at least three times in their level. All six prize winners for Levels One and Two are now promoted to the next level. Congratulations to Pamela Lowrey who has been promoted to the Honours List!

2019 WINNERS	Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
1st Place \$60	Kathryn Drinkwater	57	Sue Thatcher	69	Pamela Lowrey	51
2nd Place \$50	Jean Crane	30	Alex Treat	45	Jean Shewan	39
3rd Place \$40	Felicity Logan	27	Ruth Jamieson	21	Janet Fleming	33

It could be you on the winners board next year! Give it your best attempt each magazine edition and have fun!

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Write a true or fictional story of a family celebrating Christmas in a third world country that has outlawed Christianity. 500 words.

General Comments

Congratulations to the six people who entered this competition. Each of you wrote a good story—which, of course, made selecting First, Second and Third Place winners that much harder.

After re-reading and comparing entries several times, I finally awarded:

- **First Place**—to Jean Crane for presenting me with the most credible story of Christmas in a modern third world country.
- **Second Place**—to Kathryn Drinkwater for presenting me with an almost entirely grammatically correct entry pertaining to the first Christmas story.
- **Third Place**—to Danny Mwinga for presenting me with the most compelling story of all six entries received. This was an excellent effort by a new member and I would have placed him higher had his punctuation and the conclusion to his story been better.

Also worthy of mention are Jennifer Woods, Allison Wilson and Corrine Sinclair for their well-written and highly commendable entries. Well done to you all.

Areas for improvement include:

1. **Direct Speech and Punctuation**

Punctuation marks such as commas, question marks, exclamation marks and full stops should always be placed before the closing speech marks, not after them. Also, when one person is speaking at length across several paragraphs, each paragraph should begin with opening speech marks, and the closing speech marks put at the end of the final paragraph to indicate the person has stopped talking.

2. **Show, Don't Tell**

The tendency for many writers of short stories is to provide too much information to the reader instead of allowing them to 'experience' the story for themselves. So avoid long introductions and preachy conclusions, as these can be off-putting. It is far better to weave plenty of action, words, thoughts, senses and feelings into your story that ultimately point to your takeaway message.

3. **The Importance of Credibility**

It is necessary to have a good understanding of your topic if you are to write a credible story. While it may be a nice idea to have the family of a converted Muslim family display Christmas decorations in their home, it is hardly likely to happen in a country where the penalty for converting to Christianity may be a death sentence or, at the very least, brutal persecution.

4. **Keep Exclamation Marks to a Bare Minimum**

First Place



Jean
Crane
of Tauranga

Secret Christmas

Christmas is banned! The message blared out across the city. Anyone caught celebrating Christmas will be imprisoned. The only birthday to be celebrated is that of the Supreme Leader.

Emily remembered the wonderful Christmas Day she had celebrated with her parents. Her parents had become Christians when they had gone to a neighbouring Country in search of food and met a Pastor who had shared the gospel with them. Christmas had then taken on a whole new meaning for the family. Now they knew the person whose birthday they were celebrating.

But the Country had changed. The Supreme Leader had set himself up as a god to be worshipped and obeyed. Everything was controlled. What you said, where you went, what you wore and even the cutting of your hair. To confess you were a follower of Jesus meant automatic imprisonment in a labour camp. This had happened to her parents.

The daily routine of prison life, hard physical labour from 5am till 8pm on five small spoons of rice a day, had taken its toll on Emily's parents. Even eating the snakes, rats, mice and insects they found wasn't enough to keep them from starving. The guards treated them as slaves, regularly beating them for not bowing deeply enough, or for praising the Lord Jesus instead of the Supreme Leader. But now they were both gone, killed because of their faith in God.

Life for Emily was grim. She lived with her husband and two children in a small, single roomed mud hut, full of cracks, with no running water. Winter's freezing temperatures meant everything was frozen and because there was very little firewood for the stove, they couldn't heat the house.

Despite the Supreme Leader's announcement, the family made the decision to still celebrate Christmas even though there would be no gifts, decorations, or Christmas tree, as this would reveal they were remembering Christ's birth.

Carefully checking there were no guards near the house, the family lit their one remaining candle and gathered closely together, to secretly celebrate their Saviour's coming into the world. They softly sang songs of praise and quietly read the Bible that had come to them from across the border. They also whispered prayers, especially that God would save their Supreme Leader. After this time of worship, the family sat down to eat the small amount of boiled rice that remained in the pot. Despite having so very little themselves, the family chose to follow the practice of 'Holy Rice' and set aside some of the food, so they could share it with those who had even less.

Just as they were about to begin their meagre meal, they heard a faint scratching sound on the door. Pulling aside the flimsy curtain, they found a bag containing food, winter clothes and blankets. It had been smuggled in by a courageous underground Christian Worker.

The family stood quietly together and whispered thanks to the Lord God for His wonderful Christmas provision.

Second Place



Kathryn
Drinkwater
of Hokianga

Great Nana's Famous Story

Six-year-old Promise ran along the dimly lit tunnel and stopped uncertainly at the entrance of a wide cavern. Her relatives had gathered. She saw smiles and heard hushed whispers. Delicious smells wafted from the far side.

"Here she is," her father smiled and beckoned. "Come on, Promise, Great Nana is about to tell the famous Christ-child's birthday story. You don't want to miss it."

Promise spotted her frail Great Nana, now ninety-five years old. She was lying propped against pillows on a frayed rug, patting an empty space beside her. Promise ran over and snuggled down under the woman's thin arm.

Gazing back up at watching, familiar faces Promise saw tiredness, uneasiness and hope. Among the four generations present she could see her favourite relative - Grandad-John. The only person missing was Promise's mother. She'd been killed by the Romans who were hunting and killing Christians. The rest of the family had escaped by hiding in the secret network of caves.

Great Nana cleared her throat to speak. The hushed whispers fell respectfully silent.

"It was a cloudless, starry night when the Christ-child's mother and her husband, Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. Joseph was leading her on a donkey through dark streets. She was heavily expecting a baby who'd been placed in her womb by the Holy Spirit. Joseph was trying to find a room but at each place they were turned away. The town was full because people had travelled from far and wide to obey the ruler's orders and be counted. The pains of labour were upon the young woman, who was still just an innocent, teenage girl. She knew her baby was special but didn't fully understand. She desperately prayed for God to provide and at the very last Inn, the owner said they could use a small barn where he kept his animals.

So, there they went and just in time too, for the baby was born soon after. She wrapped him in cloths and made a soft bed for him in a feed manger. Such a humble beginning for the Son of God! He was unique. He was a treasure! She loved him dearly.

Angels appeared in the sky singing and celebrating his birth. Shepherds saw them and came to find the Christ-child. It was amazing! Mary and Joseph never forgot that beautiful night.”

There were smiles and nods and some wiping away of tears while everyone gradually shifted their attention to the food. “Great Nana,” whispered Promise, “is the story true?”

“Oh, yes,” she whispered back.

“How do you know?”

“Because I was there.”

“What do you mean?”

“The young mother in the story – was me.”

Promise’s eyes widened in surprise. She watched as her smiling, Great Nana sank deeper into the pillows, sleepily closing her eyes.

“Oh, Promise,” Great Nana whispered weakly, “He’s here! He’s come for me! My son has returned...” Her head fell gently to the side. Her face was peaceful as she exhaled for the last time.

Third Place



Danny
Mwinga
of Auckland

The Day is Today

“Is everyone ready”, papa asked as he searched around for his other shoe. Mama was ready and had a bag packed with bandages and some Savlon cream she got from the missionaries who stopped by last year. She also packed the gooey paste made from traditional yarrow leaves that grandma who we called Ba Nene always kept in store. Ba Nene who had been through this so many times that the skin on her back was calloused and felt leathery to the touch was ready as well. She sat by a small stool just outside the front door talking to Sana who had a bit of a sour face drawn centrally by a small pouting mouth as per usual especially when she didn’t get it her way. Ba Nene started saying, “but you are too young to”, “that’s not fair”, Sana cut in though, “did he not say bring all the little children to me”. I had a chuckle to myself looking at Ba Nene struggling to find a response.

As for me, I had just turned 13 and this was a huge milestone which made me both scared and excited. The law was pretty clear, anyone over the age of 12 found celebrating Christmas would receive 25 lashes plus would also be fined a huge sum. Papa had started saving for us all at the start of the year, he worked odd jobs here and there saving everything he made. Sometimes he had to go out of town for days on end doing only God knows what but he never complained and referred to this as carrying his cross. He always said that by the time I was 13, he would have saved enough for me too. He also insisted though that it was up to me to make the choice of whether I would join him, Mama, Ba Nene and the other “Celes” as they were called.

A sudden shiver of what I called “fearcitement” went down my spine as I thought about what I was going to do. Every year, on the same day and without fail, a mass would flock to the stadium to sing and celebrate (hence “Celes”) the birth of their saviour with no fear knowing full well that the C.O.T or Christmas Outlaw Task-force would be waiting. After we reached the stadium and I saw the C.O.T “processing” the outlaws as it was called, my body froze and fear overshadowed me like a shroud of smoke without a shred of excitement in site. I literally could not breathe and I found myself squeezing papa's hand real tight. The sound of the whip as it landed on the backs of those who were being processed echoed through my ears and drowned out every other sound and before I realised it, I had come to a complete stop. Papa was waving his hand in my face and saying, “You don’t have to if you are not ready”.

Level Two

Judge: Janice Gillgren

Requirement: Write a letter to the editor of a secular paper about a current moral or political issue. Using clear arguments, explain your position in exactly 150 words without being ‘preachy’. If including Bible passages, use brief quotes, preferably from modern translations.

General Comments

I had two entries again this time and they were both of good quality. Sue Thatcher earned first place and Alex Treat earned second place, so well done to you both.

The requirement was to write a letter to the editor. I have written quite a few myself to our local newspaper editors over the years and, apart from their potential to positively influence your community, they are also a terrific writing exercise. Why? The two most important aspects, and also the two most challenging, are clarity and brevity. There's no room for waffle.

Start with the best and most concise title you can. The introductory sentence or paragraph should be like a horse released from the gate in a race. It should head in the right direction immediately and powerfully. Beware of anything that slows you down, like negative starts, and put the most important facts early in the sentence.

In order to get your thoughts within the required word limit, whatever that may be, focus is critical. Choose your topic, get some ideas together about it, then prune those ideas until you have just the ones that say what you want to convey. (Extra ideas can go into another letter, so you don't need to try and squeeze them into this one.) Prune them some more so that your thoughts are expressed in the least amount of words necessary to make good sense, and there's no repetition. Use active language rather than passive.

Make sure that your points follow on logically from one another. Play around with the order of the sentences if you are unsure. Your conclusion should concisely wrap up the overall message, such as 'Facts please' in Sue's letter.

Of course, you also want to say something that will be of interest and value.

Although neither entrant included Bible verses in their letter, these can be used if desired. Sadly though, in our world today, using biblical references can be a turn-off to readers. The point(s) you want to make have to be clear before and/or without recourse to Bible verses.

Unlike in writing for publication (such as articles for magazines), there is less demand for perfect writing. This isn't intended as a contradiction of what I've written here so far. Readers don't expect letter-writers to be at professional standard, so more emotion and personal opinion are acceptable and even expected. They show the writer to be 'on their level' and thus relatable. A lack of emotion can even seem a bit cold or preachy in a letter.

So – keep your points brief and to the point, carefully crafted for clarity, and also be yourself.

First Place



Sue
Thatcher
of
Whangaparaoa

We'll Eat What We're Fed!

To the Editor,

On October 28 the NZ Herald published several articles about the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. It was relating to a documentary highlighting a tour of Africa they undertook as part of their work. My concern is the insatiable, obsessive focus on them as individuals that completely overshadows the issues they are highlighting. First through the documentary, second via worldwide media.

What happened to reporting clear facts about focussed topics rather than assumption and gossip?

The media should use its platform professionally. Consumers would stop hungering after this rubbish if they stopped being fed it. This immature quest of one-up-man-ship needs to grow up!

Many talented and focussed individuals in our world are using their resources to highlight interesting, informative and imminent issues. Let us consume important facts rather than drowning in your current agenda of 'look what I got away with today'.

Facts please,

Sue Thatcher

Second Place



Alex Treat
of Hamilton

To the editor

To the editor.

Unfortunately, in recent years, feminism has led to the de-feminization of women. Mistaking equality for sameness, women in pursuit of equality have stressed that those characteristics typically held by men, such as a commanding persona, ought to be held by women in equal or perhaps even greater measure. Yet what such activists fail to realize is that, in doing so, they have merely urged women to conform to masculine standards rather than truly set women free. True equality for women will only be found when women stop trying to mimic men and rather excel in that which makes them valuably different; and despite popular opinion, these differences are more than just social constructs. Scientific research has even revealed a physical distinction in the brains of the two sexes. So, to truly be equal, women must stop acting like men and rather embrace their femininity.

Alex Treat.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: You've been asked to present a five minute devotional, based on a verse from the Bible, at a church function. Make sure the application is suitable for modern times and will challenge and encourage your listeners. (300 words)

General Comments

A devotional is a short inspirational piece of writing based on Scripture. It normally involves a relevant story, anecdote or personal insight, followed by an application to challenge or encourage the reader/hearer in their Christian life and hopefully draw them closer to God.

This assignment involved the following aspects:

- 1. The time length was five minutes so every word must count. It's not a sermon so the focus should be on one or two main points. Quote the verse and then capture the reader's attention immediately.*
- 2. The audience is at a church function so most listeners should be familiar with Christian language and terminology. It's still necessary, however, to avoid Christian jargon as much as possible and to aim for clear, simple language understood by all.*
- 3. The devotional is based on a verse selected from the Bible. While a verse of Scripture can stand alone, we need to be mindful of its context. Making Scripture say what we want it to say can be unwise.*
- 4. The application should relate a biblical truth to real life in our modern times. End the devotional with a challenging takeaway message. This may include a short poem, a wise saying or a prayer.*

I received eight excellent entries to this competition. The style was different in every case and some entrants followed my requirements more closely, so were awarded higher marks.

In choosing the place-getters, I looked for a devotional that sparkled; one that had a captivating and uplifting story with a challenging and encouraging application for our modern times. Some of the entries were sound theologically but rather formal in their language and content. All were well-written with few mistakes which is what I expect at this level.

Though not placed this time, entries by Jean Shewan, Keith Willis, Pat Kerr, Carol Duffy and Ray Barton were highly commended and I hope they get the opportunity sometime to present their devotionals.

First Place



John
Lindsay
of Christchurch

Chaos at Christmas

It was two days before Christmas and my wife was pleased to be finished the shopping, but her relief was short-lived. A vehicle speeding out of the car park building slammed into her and in the process, also smashed our plans.

If you are like me, you prefer a calm Christmas. No last minute rush to the shops, no travel delays, no arguments over Christmas dinner, no sun burn at the beach.

Just as it was that first Christmas, right?

You know, the one where God disrupted the lives of thousands, with Mary and Joseph at the centre of the turmoil.

‘This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit’ (Matthew 1:18 NIV).

They were ordinary, God-fearing people, yet God put them through this embarrassing, shameful experience.

Pregnant out of wedlock!

Imagine the gossip.

An angel visited Joseph to reassure him that Mary had done nothing wrong, but I expect the local chatter continued.

Imagine the chaos on the road to Bethlehem. Surely God could have changed the timing of the census so Joseph and Mary didn’t have to travel so late in the pregnancy.

So how did it all pan out? Exactly as it was supposed to. Precisely as predicted hundreds of years earlier.

Christ the Saviour was born in Bethlehem. The angels put on a special choral performance for the shepherds and today we still proclaim the same message, “a Saviour has been born... Christ the Lord.”

You and I would have found that first Christmas uncomfortable, confusing and disruptive; so when we face difficult times, let us trust God to work out his good and perfect plan in our lives.

Second Place



Janet
Fleming
of Kaeo

Not Trash but treasure!

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

Yesterday I saw this sign on a church building. ‘Do you feel like trash? God is in the business of recycling lives.’

Is this statement true? Not entirely, because I believe that God does more than recycle. He takes a life that is ruined by sin, and in Christ that person is given a new start.

When our boys were young they bought two damaged bambinas. They worked hard to repair them. One painted his the original red and it looked lovely. The other two boys wanted a car the colour of their sister's bicycle. That was a bright pink. Those cars may have looked great, but in reality the paint covered a lot of bog and imperfections.

Hebrews 10:16 & 17 says – ‘The Holy Spirit also testifies...’ ‘This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.’ Then He adds: “Their sins and their lawless acts I will remember no more.”

When Christ changes a life and the Holy Spirit comes to live within, we have a new start. Has He changed your life today? Has your life become a treasure to God?

I was walking the pathway that leads to hell,
My life it was ruined, I knew it so well,
My heart it was full of sin and pain,
But I have been changed, I've been born again.

I am different now since Jesus came in,
For He cleansed my heart and He took my sin,
It's such wonderful news for I am free.
Forgiven and treasured eternally.

Third Place



Pamela
Lowrey
of Havelock
North

Fix it Daddy

When I was three I was given a celluloid baby doll. I named her Sally and carted her everywhere. My father made her a little wooden bed. My mother fixed a pillow and a cosy blanket. My little brother was just learning to walk. During a wobbly fit he overbalanced and abruptly sat on Sally's head while she was sleeping.

Tears flowed when I saw Sally's face shattered in a zillion pieces. My parents tried to comfort me as we picked up the pieces. In childlike faith I cried, 'Fix it daddy, fix it!' Daddy took Sally to the Doll's Hospital to get mended.

When my father returned with Sally she had a brand new modern face, but she was not my Sally anymore. I sat her on the shelf and ignored her. My father noted my disappointment. In the excitement of Christmas Eve, I never even noticed Sally's disappearance.

On Christmas morning my daddy brought Sally to me. When I saw her, she had her old face back! I learned that my daddy had painstakingly glued each tiny fragment together. He spent hours working under the house in the cold, with one solitary light bulb reconstructing Sally's face. There was a lot of glue holding all the pieces together. Whenever I looked at her patched up face I saw my daddy's love.

Today, I am reminded of another daddy's love, the love of our heavenly Father who is the mender of broken lives, shattered dreams and unfulfilled hopes. He can fix the most hopeless situation putting all the fragments together without needing any glue.

Any time we can ask Him to 'Fix it Daddy,' no matter what it is, and have the absolute assurance that He will.

'He makes everything perfect in His time.' Ecclesiastes 3:11a.

Thank You 2019 Contestants

A big end-of-year thank you to all the many contestants who sent entries into our competitions this year. Your enthusiastic and creative participation is appreciated. NZCW judges and magazine readers do enjoy reading your assignments each edition. Keep up the good work and we look forward to seeing what you produce during 2020.

Student Competitions in 2020

Next year NZCW is launching a supplement magazine for youth called *Young Christian Writer*. We are in the planning stage of setting up competitions for our student members. Details will be advertised in the new magazine so keep an eye out for details in our first edition due out Feb-Mar 2020. Next year is going to be an exciting year!

Competitions for February 2020

Due by January 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

Level One—for members 16 years old and over

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.



Debbie

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

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..



Janice

Email entry to Janice Gillgren at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

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.



Julia

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org



NZ CHRISTIAN writers



ROSIE BOOM author, speaker and singer-songwriter, lives with her husband Chris and their six children on a small lifestyle block near Whangarei. She spent her childhood in the jungles of New Guinea, and wrote her first short story

there at age nine. It won an Australasian short story competition and Rosie received a first edition copy of *The Fellowship of the Ring* as a prize.

Rosie is a registered nurse, and worked for a year in Borneo before returning to NZ to marry Chris. They have six children whom Rosie home schools. She speaks at many homeschooling conventions and parenting workshops throughout NZ and overseas. She began writing in earnest in 1999 and a number of her short stories and articles have been published in the NZ School Journal and overseas magazines. *Where the Jungle Calls* is her ninth book.

www.rosieboom.com