

APRIL - MAY 2020

THE CHRISTIAN writer

SEE INSIDE FOR

New One Day Retreat –
Wellington Written

DayStar Books Today

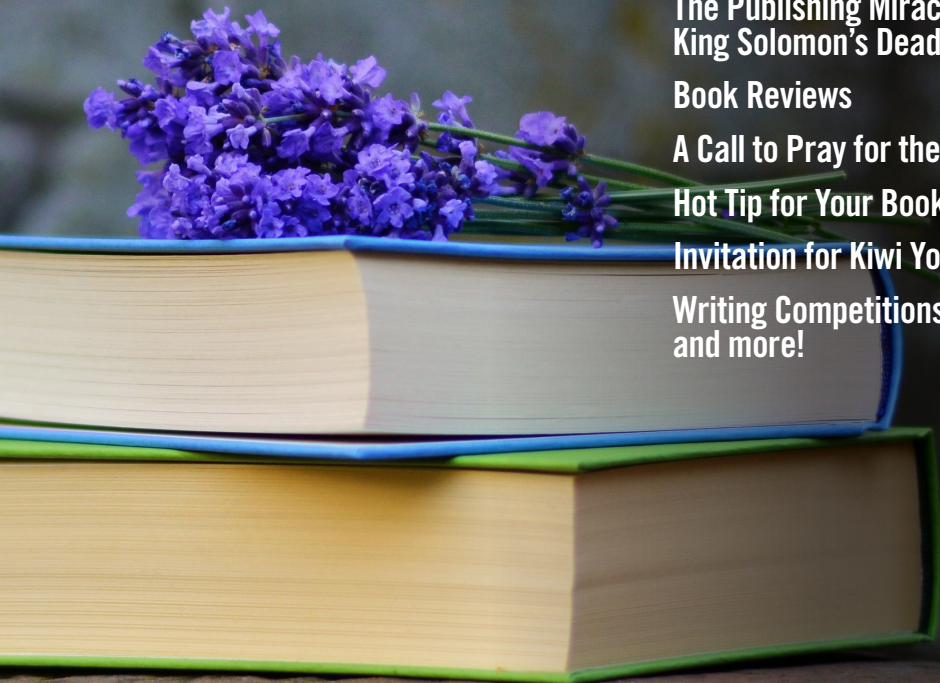
The Publishing Miracle of
King Solomon's Deadly Legacy

Book Reviews

A Call to Pray for the Nation

Hot Tip for Your Book's Publicity
Invitation for Kiwi Young Writers

Writing 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.*

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

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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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CW Competitions

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The views and opinions of authors expressed in this magazine do not necessarily state or reflect those of the editor.

Website:

Our vibrant, user-friendly website is full of interesting information, such as details of seminars and copies of past magazines. It also gives each individual member an online presence. So please encourage other Christian writers to join us via our website:

www.nzchristianwriters.org

President's Report



Welcome to Autumn 2020! I personally feel the change of a season is a great reminder to consider life in all its busyness, to put down some of the old and be inspired to start something new. For some of us, this may

mean starting that new article or book you have had on your mind. For others, it may mean restarting a book you've put on the shelf for too long. My encouragement today is simply to start. Pray and see where God is guiding you to be an inspiration. As written in Ephesians 2:10, NKJV: 'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.' These are works done, not in our own strength and for our own benefit, but by the grace of God.

In this edition of *The Christian Writer* you'll see our Wellington Local Group Leader, Paul Devereux, together with Rob Lake have arranged an inaugural Wellington Written gathering for the lower North Island. Guest speakers, George Bryant and Susan Holt, will share their writing journey. This will be on Saturday 13th June 2020, 9am-5pm, at Silverstream Retreat Centre in Lower Hutt. Feel free to recommend this event to writer friends and family who live nearby. We want to encourage our other writing groups around the country to host their own seminars or retreats. These special events offer excellent value for learning and being upskilled in writing and publishing. They also help us grow and inspire a vibrant community of Christian writers.



Rob Lake, Justin St. Vincent and Paul Devereux, met in Wellington on February 18th 2020 to discuss plans for a one-day retreat for the lower North Island at Silverstream Retreat Centre on June 13th 2020.

We will now hold our Retreat in 2021 and have secured the dates Thursday 29th April to Sunday 2nd May 2021: www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2021/. I'm excited that up to 40 of our writers will be attending. Together they will experience inspiring speakers in the beautiful surroundings of Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga.

Our AGM 2020, where we appoint or renew our Board members for the next 12 months and provide a financial update, will be held later this year. More details will be sent to you via email.

We trust you are encouraged and inspired by our new edition of *The Christian Writer*.

Blessings,
Justin St Vincent

BOOK
TODAY!

NZ CHRISTIAN
writers

RETREAT

APRIL 30TH - MAY 3RD 2020

FLAX HILL RETREAT CENTRE · WHITIANGA

**POSTPONED UNTIL
2021**



**STACI
MCLEAN**



**KAREN
MCMILLAN**



**EUGENE
MOREAU**



**PHIL
STRONG**

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

POSTPONED

WELLINGTON WRITTEN 2020



**GEORGE
BRYANT**



**SUSAN
HOLT**

DATE & TIME:

Saturday
13th June 2020
9am - 5pm

VENUE:

Silverstream Retreat
3 Reynolds Bach Drive
Stokes Valley
Lower Hutt 5019

COST:

\$60 (Full-Day, including lunch)
\$20 (Half-Day)

RSVP Paul Devereux | 022-053-3618
paulrdevereux@xtra.co.nz

PAYMENT: Treasurer, Debbie Smith: treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org | 021-174-0174

Editorial: Dare to Think Big

by Kathryn Drinkwater



Hi everyone! How are your writing projects going? More importantly, how is your walk with the Lord going? When we are applying ourselves to our journey with God, including quality time with him, it's amazing how our writing projects flow from this place of inner strength.

If you were asked to share the desires of your heart for your writing what would you say? Would you answer with the most practical, reasonable-sounding reply? Or would you dig deep, speak out in faith and share that crazy-sounding, seemingly-unreachable desire that's buried deep within? I believe God wants us to dare to dream, dare to think big, dare to hope for the extreme or the seemingly impossible—because with him nothing is impossible. How do you know your deep desire wasn't planted there by God in the first place? There's nothing wrong with being honest about what you'd really, *really*, like to happen. Speak it out, pray it out, hope for it. Dare to believe God for it. God loves doing the remarkable!

It's wonderful to think big for others. When we give encouragement to others in their writing dreams, it's a bit like giving tithes and offerings. We can show support to others by purchasing their books, speaking a word of encouragement and promoting their work. Over the years I've noticed the Lord always blesses me when I purchase the work of Christians, whether it be music, books, art, movies or whatever. God has often surprised me by replacing that money immediately. I've come to realise God appreciates the work they've produced and appreciates my support of it. They've been doing their work for him and he's backing them up. When we support them, he backs us up. When we're doing our own work for him, he's backing us up too. God is faithful!

As writers we're usually on an individual path focusing on what we're producing. We can become very inward focused. We may become self-centred if we're not careful. By supporting other Christian writers and artists it reminds us we're part of a large team working for the Lord. Let's celebrate other's successes!

Unfortunately, thoughtless comments and unhelpful opinions can knock us off our writing-track. If this happens, with the help of the Holy Spirit we need to forgive, bless and pray for those who hurt us. We can ask and expect the Lord to heal us, so we're no longer affected. Sometimes we might need to repeat this process to get it from our head to our heart. We mustn't allow a negative incident to hinder our progress. At the same time, it's important to be humble and open to constructive feedback.

If you're currently avoiding unnecessary physical contact due to the virus, try to turn this quieter time into a positive opportunity. Spend extra time seeking God... and write.

Members: When writing letters to the editor or sending writing contributions please email:
editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Professional Writing Services (for help with your manuscript)

Janette Busch

E: WritingAnswers1@gmail.com
or Janette.Busch@gmail.com

Marie Anticich

E: marieanticich@gmail.com

Iola Goulton

E: igoulton@christianediting.co.nz

Lissa Weight

Pinpoint Proofreading
E: lydiaweight@gmail.com

Brian Cavit

Proofreader and Editor, Cavit Enterprises
E: cavitent@gmail.com

Candice Hume

E: info@astuteediting.co.nz

Notices

NZCW Retreat 2020 Postponed

Due to the Government's recent announcements placing restrictions on gatherings because of COVID-19 / Coronavirus and the general sentiment across the wider New Zealand public about attending events, we will now hold our Retreat in 2021. We have secured the dates *Thursday 29th April to Sunday 2nd May 2021* at Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga: www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2021/.

Our sincere apologies for any inconvenience this has caused for your travel arrangements and your anticipation of having time together as a community of writers.

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.

DayStar Books Today

by George Bryant, QSM

DayStar Books Ltd is the only not-for-profit publishing company in New Zealand, and it is a Christian one. We provide a ministry to those who wish to write from a Christian world view about any topic or theme and, as such, we keep costs affordable.

DayStar Books was established in 2010 by George Bryant and Julie Belding, following the demise of the evangelical Christian magazine *DayStar*, of which George was chairman and Julie editor. Before that, Julie had edited the *NZ Baptist* and George had written a number of books published by various companies. George is a member of the NZ Society of Authors and Julie is a long-standing member of the Australasian Religious Press Association.

DayStar's aim is to promote New Zealand authors, especially those who have good, wholesome manuscripts but would have difficulty getting them published by major publishing companies. We look for material that 'inspires and gives hope, books that will influence society in a positive way'. To date we have published 38 of them, from authors all around New Zealand.

These include biographies of various sorts, books on social issues, lifestyles, Christian spirituality, two novels, health and wellbeing, teenage fiction, historical books and travel. One of our books won the prestigious Ashton/Wylie Award and became a Christian bestseller.

We market our own books through shops and libraries in New Zealand, but also worldwide, largely through Amazon and Book Depository. We have developed a style and format that aims to reach the wider, general market rather than just church attenders, both strengthening the dedicated Christian and challenging the non-believer.

At present a further three books are being processed, including George's 23rd title, his wife Joan's biography, and a book about being saved from a life of abuse.

The DayStar Board consists of George and Julie (both with a wide experience in writing, editing and publishing), Bernard Yeo (consultant and graphic artist), Jan Pendergrast (children's author), Christel Jeffs (author and editor) and Jeanette Knudsen (author). Additionally, we have a widespread team of editors, graphic artists and others with various expertise which we call upon from time to time.

We provide free critiques and advice, and George holds seminars around the country. He will be a guest speaker at NZCW's Wellington Written in June.

STOP PRESS! If you have a skill in any of the writing/editing/publishing areas and would like to join our team please contact George (bryantgw@xtra.co.nz). We are especially interested in anyone who sees writing and publishing as a ministry for reaching out to fringe and non-Christians – a golden chance to learn.

Please ask for our brochure and check out our website: www.daystarbooks.org.



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

The Publishing Miracle of *King Solomon's Deadly Legacy*

by John Fergusson

Watching a worship video at life group in March 2019, a crawl appeared on the screen; 'It's time to self-publish.'

The group grinned. 'That's you, John,' one said, and we replayed the video. The crawl wasn't there.

I'd completed *King Solomon's Deadly Legacy* two years earlier and hawked it around agents and publishers without a bite. I had prayed for years for an American publisher. Now it seemed that wasn't to be.

King Solomon fell into idolatry, leaving Israel divided, invaded and later exiled. Western culture is following in his footsteps, risking the same outcomes.

As I'd already published several books through Amazon's KDP, I googled other options, finding Ingram Spark also provided for self-publishing. Their website offered a free pdf, *A Pocket Guide to Publishing* by John Koehler and Joe Cocco. A sucker for a bargain, I downloaded and read it through. Twice.

It was so helpful, I emailed John Koehler to thank him, adding a PS. 'Any tips on how a New Zealand author might find an American publisher?'

John replied, 'Send us your manuscript.'

A month later he emailed again. 'We believe your manuscript has merit.' I joined their Emerging Authors Program and signed a contract—without an agent. I signed up with Koehler Books, a small boutique publisher in Virginia Beach.

The book is historical fiction. A British scientist finds himself in 997BC, the first of a series of visits to history. As an atheist his faith is challenged, but he discovers the reasons for King Solomon's eventual decline have alarming parallels with our modern world.

I spent five years in research, even visiting Israel twice. The book launches at Easter.

Editor's Note: Thank you, John for sharing your publishing story with NZ Christian Writers. Readers who would like to follow the progress of John's new book can visit www.jfm.org.nz.

I would love to hear other interesting publishing stories from our members. If you would like to share please send an article to editor@nzchristianwriters.org.

WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian Writing of
today and yesteryear-

Series by Frederick Swallow

Frederick Lehman

1868—1955

***Were every Man a Scribe by
Trade***

A business setback caused Frederick Lehman of California to work in a shed, packing fruit into crates. There he recalled a message about the love of God and penned two verses on wooden slats.

Needing a third verse he recalled a poem he kept on a bookmark about the love of God. The words (as follows) were scrolled on an asylum wall by a former demented inmate in a moment of sanity and were uncovered when workmen later cleaned the cell.

Could we with ink the ocean fill.

*And were the skies of parchment
made,*

*Were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill and
ev'ry man a scribe by trade.*

*To write the love of God above
would drain the oceans dry.*

*Nor could the scroll contain the
whole,*

Tho' stretched from sky to sky.

Lehman's daughter Claudia wrote the music. The first two stanzas were written by an 11th century Jewish Rabbi.

Five Keys I Have Gained by Being a Member of a NZ Christian Writers Group

by Rod Hickman

1. Learning to say YES to God. I refuse to be defined by my circumstances or lack. I used to think I could never write but it's a matter of trusting God and stepping out.
2. Invest in my assignment. If God wants me to write then I best invest in paper, manuscripts, iPad or materials for me to be successful. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.
3. Be teachable. Read the helpful articles in the magazine and try to put them into practice.
4. Never give up. Sometimes we stumble and our writings are poor or misunderstood. But I brush myself off and start again.
5. Keep in community. Have fellowship with Christians who are also interested in writing. There is a bond that develops within community. I love that too. There are people we can pray with and learn from.

God bless you all. Rod Hickman.



In China Soup

By Ian Gemmill

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Xulon Press Elite
USA 2019

Having recently visited China as a tourist, I found this book particularly interesting.

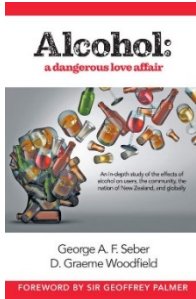
Ian went to China in 2007 to teach mathematics at an International School in the city of Lizhou. Using a pseudonym (Liam Campbell) in the book, he describes his travel and experiences there; giving valuable insight into the Chinese people, their languages, culture and way of life.

Ian made contact with many nationalities while working and studying in various parts of the country, but of particular interest was his friendship with Evans Ozumbe from Zambia. The two men came from different backgrounds and perspectives. He writes: 'One man was dark, the other fair-skinned. Both men were dunked in the 'soup' of China and were changed by it. One survived and almost relished it while the other one was desperate to break free.'

Ian gives his view of the politics of the country, the state-sanctioned Three-Self Churches, and the emergence of China as a great economic and world power.

I recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in China and particularly to those contemplating work there. From his own experience, Ian warns about: work contracts being broken for no apparent reason; few job opportunities for people over 40 years and a one size fits all policy of regulations.

In 2011, Ian returned to New Zealand. While there may have been some changes since his being there, I believe it's a valuable source of information and reflection.



Alcohol: A Dangerous Love Affair

By George Seber and D. Graeme Woodfield

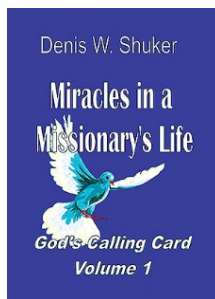
Review by Julia Martin

Published by Wild Side
Publishing 2020

George Seber, statistician, counsellor and author, has teamed up with medical doctor, Graeme Woodfield, to produce this scholarly, in-depth study of alcohol and its significance to New Zealand. While this well-researched and exhaustive study of alcohol is largely secular, I was particularly interested in the final chapter entitled, 'The Bible and Wine'.

Here the authors deal with passages of Scripture, which can be controversial, concerning wine and strong drink, and they give the biblical and cultural explanation of each of these.

I recommend this book to anyone who wants to be fully and reliably informed about every aspect of alcohol and its effects in New Zealand.



Miracles in a Missionary's Life Volume One

Edited by Denis W. Shuker

Review by Kathryn Drinkwater

Published by Joyful
Publishers 2014

When faith needs a boost, this book is a great candidate for the job. It's filled with short, action-packed true stories that show God's faithfulness and provision in many amazing ways.

As a brief, easy read, I recommend it for anyone on or preparing for the mission field, new believers and it may even challenge the sceptic. This book is a great reminder that when missionaries step out into extreme circumstances, God is reliable and often surprises with extreme answers.

A Call to Pray for the Nation

by Robin Cox

On Thursday morning, January 9, 2020, a small group gathered at our home to pray for New Zealand. This group has made a commitment to pray together one hour each week. For more information about this prayer initiative visit: <http://yess.co.nz/home/2020-pray-for-new-zealand/>

If you feel God is calling you to pray for New Zealand, please consider being a part of a small group in your community spending one hour a week in 2020 praying for New Zealand. When you have a group in place, please email the postal codes of the group members (no names needed) to robincox908@gmail.com, so I can add these to a map of New Zealand.

Are you already part of a small group praying for one hour (or more) each week specifically for New Zealand? Please let us know. Just send the postal codes of group members (no names) to robincox908@gmail.com as we want to encourage each other on this prayer journey. As a new group we also want to be encouraged knowing that there are many, many people already praying for New Zealand.

We would love to know, as soon as possible, that every part of New Zealand is covered by prayer. We want to partner with everyone praying for this beautiful country. Please forward this invitation to as many of your Christian friends, church connections, Christian schools/communities as possible.

Many thanks and God bless.

Robin Cox (facilitator and map plotter!)

Mentoring Matters – www.yess.co.nz

Hot Tip – Networking with Newsletters

by Kathryn Drinkwater

I recently received a tip via a newsletter about writers networking with others using newsletters. Instead of authors using only their own individual newsletter and contact list of supporters, some are learning to combine their efforts for greater publicity. When working together as a team they are reaching a greater number of potential readers. One example might be, 'If you allow me to advertise my book in your newsletter, I can do the same for you in my newsletter.' This way the writers have doubled their outreach, assuming their two lists of contacts are different. It's worth considering teaming up with others but remember email addresses are private so don't share an email address without the owner's permission.

Writers Groups

AUCKLAND, ELLERSLIE

Sara McGuire

Mob: (021) 116 8702

sara.mcguire81@gmail.com

CHRISTCHURCH

Dave Palmer

Mob: (027) 216 5743

davepalmer@xtra.co.nz

FAR NORTH (KERIKERI)

Geraldine Craw

Mob: (027) 614 0445

fcraw@xtra.co.nz

HAWKES BAY

Jennie Chappell

Tel: (06) 877 5874

heughandjenniec@outlook.com

NORTHLAND (WHANGAREI)

Geraldine Craw

Mob: (027) 614 0445

fcraw@xtra.co.nz

PALMERSTON NORTH

Rodney Hickman

Mob: (022) 676 3640

rodneyhickmanpoet@gmail.com

TAURANGA

Ruth Linton

Mob: (021) 408 661

ruthlinton2015@gmail.com

WELLINGTON

Paul Devereux

Mob: (022) 053 3618

paulrdevereux@xtra.co.nz

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:

Lesley Ayers

Tauranga

Jennifer Balmer

Tauranga

Christopher Barry

Auckland Central

Kenneth Bate

Dunedin

Jacquie Benucci

Auckland East

Barend Blom

Auckland East

Christine Bovill

Morrinsville

Helen Clements

Dunedin

Lyn Cole

Porirua

Jacqueline Davey

Greymouth

Michelle Farr

Auckland North

Brian France

Henderson

Glenn Grant

Christchurch

Anna Hatting

Whangarei

Huiping Li

Auckland Central

Alisa Miles

Kerikeri

Averil Naumai

Turangi

Araina Pereira

Auckland West

Jane Potter

Pukekohe

Rebekah Reid

Hamilton

Dianne Ross

Nelson

Janne Sergison

Christchurch

Caleb Smithies

Christchurch

Janet Strange

Whangaparaoa

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

Inviting Kiwi Young People to be Published

By Dr Mark Tronson – Press Service International

2020 is the ninth year of the Kiwi Young Writer Programme with *Christian Today New Zealand*.

Each year there are new young Kiwis (18-30 year olds) joining the team and being published once every five weeks (a Cycle consists of five weeks), 10 articles for the year.

This is our Kiwi team who make it all happen:

Coordinators

There are three coordinators who send out reminders for each Kiwi young writer's due date.

Weeks One and Two – Matthew Thornton from Auckland

Week Three – Jessica Knell from Auckland

Week Four – (NZ senior writers)

Week Five – Mussita Ng from Wellington

Photo selector

Kevin Park from Auckland

Facebook Uploads and Overview

Kevin Park and Araina Periera (both from Auckland)

NZ Christian Media – sends each day's articles

Manuele Teofilo, Blake Gardiner

Theological Reviewer

Rev Paul Cornish, Bishop Brian Carrell

Panellists

Bishop Brian Carrell, Major Christina Tyson, Liz Hay, Wayne Graham, Sarah Richards.

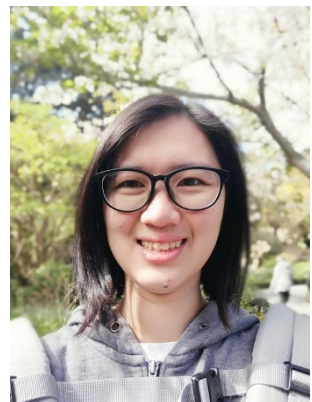
Editors

18-30s Esther Koh

Over 31s Mussita Ng



Mathew Thornton – Kiwi young writer coordinator for Weeks 1 and 2



Esther Koh – editor for the Kiwi young writers

Christian Today New Zealand

Tim Newman

Patron

Major Christina Tyson

All these people engage in the Kiwi young writer program to ensure the entire system runs smoothly.

Being published

Kiwi young writers are asked to write a 600-900 word 'Comment' article – that is you writing about something on your heart, a Christian view on an event or drama. It is not a devotional or a sermon.



*Emma McGeorge – 2018 NZ
Basil Sellers winner, 2019-20
NZ Over 31 NZ Winner*

What it is Like Writing

It is fun. It is serious. It is disciplining. It's great having your article read around the world. It is once every five weeks. You're part of a team. We have an annual conference with writing awards. We need more young Kiwis 18-30 years of age.

Interested? As a first step, contact:

Press Service International,

Dr Mark Tronson at timeout@bushorchestra.com



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>

Our New Magazine has Launched!



NZ Christian Writers has launched the first edition of *Young Christian Writer* magazine! We sent out Launch Party Packs to our Writers Groups across the country and ten Launch Party Packs went out to Christian Schools!

If you're a member of NZ Christian Writers, you would have been sent the digital copy. Full membership print subscribers to *The Christian Writer* magazine who would like a printed version of *Young Christian Writer* can request one and it will be posted to you. Student print subscribers will automatically receive printed copies of both magazines!

Our next issue will be June-September 2020. The magazine will be produced three times a year. We are promoting it into Christian schools, home-school families and anywhere else there's a young person who would like to write for Jesus. Spread the word and let's encourage our younger writers around NZ.

BookPrint.

Making Bookshop Quality Easy

At BookPrint you will find a company and staff that are 100% committed to transforming your book from an idea and a manuscript into a physical book you will be proud of. This commitment to quality means several things:

- Your book will be produced by a team that makes books everyday, and who spends their time practicing and perfecting this craft.
- Our customers benefit from informed conversations around specification, design, local and offshore production. Sometimes these conversations take 5 minutes, sometimes hours over several meetings and phone calls.
- When you work with a company committed to excellence they insist on investing time into every job.

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amy@bookprint.co.nz
www.bookprint.co.nz

Actual price example
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Softcover, perfect bound
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Writing Competitions are Underway!

Check out the current points board! Competitions for 2020 are well underway. All members are welcome to enter these competitions. In our June-July issue, Level One and Two contestants with the highest points for the first half of the year will be announced and will receive cash prizes. To be promoted to the next level a contestant needs to achieve a placing at least three times in their level. New promotions will be announced in the June-July issue. We do hope some will have the chance to advance up a 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 are added up and monetary prizes for first, second and third overall are 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	
Jessica Mounter	27	Jean Crane	15	Jean Shewan	21
Ricolene Gouden	15	Carole Sarsfield	15	John Lindsay	15
Jill Clarke	12	Ruth Jamieson	12	Pat Kerr	15
Caroline Cook	9			Keith Willis	12
Brent Lindsay	9				
Allison Wilson	9				
Rebecca Shepherd	9				

The competitions for this month can be found on page 35. You can also 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 have a copy, please download it for future reference so you can allow yourself extra time to write your entries and submit them before the deadline.

Our competitions benefit members by providing opportunities to try new writing genre. All entrants receive encouraging and valuable individual feedback from our experienced judges via email. This is a great way to learn and improve your writing!

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 the future! Give each assignment your best effort and have fun writing.

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

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.

General Comments

Congratulations to the ten people who entered this competition. Poetry is the most difficult form of writing to excel at and each of you made such a valiant effort that it took much reading, re-reading, marking and comparing of your poems to come to a decision on whom to award First, Second and Third Place. Key factors influencing the decision-making process included:

1. How well was the Easter story told?

One of the requirements of this competition was to tell the story of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension in poetry form. While most of the contestants successfully did this in detail, one of the poems submitted was more of a sermonette and another a psalm with insufficient detail on the full Easter story.

2. Did the poem have a strong impact or takeaway message?

The topic demanded passionate writing and graphic imagery in order to clearly convey to the reader the level of suffering Jesus endured and his subsequent victory over death and sin. While most of the entrants did this successfully, some were better than others.

3. How accurate was the poem's rhythm and rhyming?

Contestants did very well when it came to rhyming, but they all had a problem with maintaining a consistent syllable count and rhythm in their poems. To understand how syllables and rhythm (i.e. tempo or beat) work, below is a quote from our previous Level 3 competition judge, Ruth Linton, that future contestants and aspiring poets may find useful:

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

Despite the inconsistent syllable count, each poem entered into this competition reads well for the most part, but it would, nonetheless, be a good exercise for contestants to rework their poems until they achieve the correct rhythm.

First Place



Jessica
Mounter
of Rotorua

Mud

The dirt and stones below
Clung to His hands and knees.
His voice broke as He prayed:
“Father take this cup please”

But when God’s answer came:
“This cross is still My will,”
With pain we’ll never know
Our Saviour remained still.

They chained Him in the dust
And whipped him til’ His blood
Mixed with that dust to form
A thick and holy mud.

And as they raised Him up
With nails in His hands,
That mud He bore with love
We’ll never understand

His body bereft of life,
Entombed under the ground.
All Heaven held its breath
And did not make a sound.

‘Til when three days had passed
Earth could hold Him no more
He burst out of that tomb.
All heaven gave a roar!

He gathered His friends close
Told them that they were free.
And as His feet left Earth,
Said "Tell the world ‘bout Me."

Second Place



Jill
Clarke
of
Wanganui

An Easter Poem

Forget the good that he has done
The fact he says he's God's own son.
Offer money for the prize
We will see to his demise.
Thirty silver pieces donation
Faker's fate we will ascertain

They took him from his place of prayer
With swords and clubs no time to spare
The High Priest's house their destination
To accuse him with their fabrication.
Betrayed by Judas with a kiss
His Father's will fulfilled like this?

From Caiaphas to Pilate sent
There soldiers started their torment.
A purple cloak and thorny crown
They lead him through the busy town.
Mocked and shamed upon a cross
Women grieving at their loss.

Darkness fell at noon that day,
The temple veil was ripped away.
Nailed hands and feet, a crucifixion
King for more than Jewish nation.
The stone that blocked the tomb is gone
He has risen with the sun.

The truth is Jesus is alive
Believe, repent new life he'll give.
As he sits at God's right hand
Blessed are those who understand,
Eternal life beyond compare.
There is no death or sorrow there.

Third Place Equal



Allison
Wilson
of Gisborne

The Easter Story

Beaten, bruised and bloodied;
Jesus wore a crown of thorns.
Whilst on his way to Calvary,
The crowd just stared and scorned.

Nailed cruelly to a wooden cross,
He took the blame for me.
The penalty for sin was death.
He wanted us set free.

The curtain in the temple ripped;
The earth began to quake.
This truly was the son of God,
Yet he'd forgiven our mistake.

Taken to a cavernous tomb,
His body was laid to rest.
A large stone now sealed the cave;
Guarded at Pilate's behest.

Three days later on Sunday Morn,
The guards started scratching their heads.
The tomb is empty, how could this be?
Did Jesus just rise from the dead?

Appearing to his disciples,
Jesus had this message to say:
"As I return to my father,
The Holy Spirit comes your way."

So spread the news far and wide;
Our debts were paid by God's son.
Death has lost its hold on us.
A new era has begun!

Third Place Equal



Rebecca
Shepherd
of Hamilton

Jesus' Punishment for My Sin

"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Rises from the din.

The sentence for the One who is standing for my sin.

Crack! Thwack! Crack! Thwack! The whip comes crashing down.

Fists on flesh and jeers and jests; thorns for a crown.

Stumbling and staggering, along the track.

The Son of God weighed down; my sin on His back.

Pierced hands stretched wide, on the cross of shame.

Done so I can know His name.

With one last breath, He forgave my sin.

Satan thought he had the win.

Into the grave with a stone sealed tight.

Soldiers standing guard all day and night.

Three days and nights the tomb was blocked.

But, Jesus cannot be stopped.

As dawn began to rise; the earth began to quake.

The Son of God, alive! Death's hold did He shake.

God's love for me sent His Son to earth.

Now I know His love and have rebirth.

Level Two

Judge: Janice Gillgren

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.

General Comments

There were not many entries for this competition, which didn't surprise me, as it is isn't as popular a genre as most other writing. However, it has the capacity to be very influential in society and is worth investing our time in, so I often include a competition of this kind.

Congratulations to Carole Sarsfield for achieving first place. I didn't give any other placings.

Writing letters to MPs is a distinctly democratic and uniquely formal type of writing. Passive and wordy styles have traditionally seemed more respectful for this type of letter, but are not really sought now. It is therefore better to avoid both styles, and concentrate on getting your message across simply and clearly.

Some aspects of formality should be kept though, such as the correct address, plus any titles the MP may have. For example: Dear Mr (or the other usual forms of address)... first name or just initial(s), and last name. The title 'MP' can be added after 'Dear...' or possibly after the last name, but any special titles such as 'Honourable' usually come directly after 'Dear'.

Just writing 'Dear Sir (or Madam)', would probably make the MP think you are writing a generic letter and these letters are most often thrown into the bin.

Remember to be respectful. Beware of judgemental language, especially regarding moral issues, even if they are voting contrary to what you think is best. A hint of incrimination tends to make MPs angry rather than willing to read your views.

While a title may not seem necessary, it helps your reader to quickly identify your topic. If you are worried that showing your subject so quickly could prevent an MP even bothering to read it, try finding a title that doesn't mention alerting words, but does hint at your viewpoint. Carole's 'Live and Let Live' title achieves this well.

Do your best to create an introduction that promptly outlines your views. It is best to focus on a limited number of points — three at most — which should be clearly and simply made.

Keep your letter within a page length, with spacing that is easy on the eyes. (200 – 250 words is sufficient for a page length, using 1.5 – 2 spacing). End the letter with your full name, address and region, especially if you live in the MP's electorate. These details weren't required for this competition but remember them when you write to an MP.

When quoting from the Bible or 'The Good Book', it is a good idea at the end of your letter to write where the verses are from and the version used. Many people (not just MPs) have become quite sceptical due to loose paraphrasing of the Bible and may not be familiar enough with it to know what's a true rendering and what isn't. Even though the MP probably won't look up the reference, it gives some credibility if you add this.

First Place



Carole
Sarsfield
of Auckland

Live and let live

Dear Ms Collins

I am writing to urge you to speak out against the Euthanasia Bill. I strongly oppose this legislation and believe it to be unethical and inherently dangerous. In this age of acceptance, inclusion and understanding it is becoming increasingly difficult to define the margins of black and white as morals and integrity become smudges on the page of life.

The clear definitions of right and wrong are not only written in biblical laws but were used as the foundation this country was built on. Over recent years law changes have introduced the subtle dissolution of morality, integrity and God, in our schools, courts, parliament and society. The final chapter is to devalue substance of human life.

Human rights are a powerful tool and a justified entitlement, but not when humans seek to command the powers of God. Life is a God given gift and no-one should have the right to extinguish life, but God alone.

We are surely all going to die, whether it be next week from a terminal illness, by an accident or from old age, the eventuality does not give us the right to choose the time.

This bill at its most extreme could give us the opportunity to end life, at will. We could not only save ourselves the pain of dying but the pain (and joy) of living. Please speak out against this bill.

Kind regards

Carole Sarsfield
Papakura

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

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.

General Comments

Whether we like it or not, at some point in life most of us are obliged to make a speech. This may be at school, at a work function or even a tribute at a funeral. While some speakers are naturally gifted and can adlib, most of us need to sit down with pen and paper and agonise over what we have to say.

In this assignment you are on the world stage representing your entire country, so this is an important occasion and you need to get things right. Writing a speech to be delivered audibly is different from writing an article to be read silently. To be effective, a speech involves your personality so you need to write as you would speak, preferably with passion and enthusiasm.

Points to consider:

- The opening of your speech is crucial if you hope to capture the attention of the audience. This may involve posing a question, using a relevant quotation, or some other means to draw your listeners in.*
- You need to know your audience. In this case many listeners will know absolutely nothing about New Zealand and your objective is to persuade them that our country is a desirable place to live.*
- Develop an outline of the points you intend making so there's a natural and logical flow to your comments and you use every minute available. Do your research carefully and choose a few accurate facts to back up your statements.*
- Don't try to cover too many points or inundate your audience with too much information. Aim for short sentences and use humour where appropriate.*
- Practise reading your speech aloud to remove any stilted phrases and check the time it takes to deliver.*
- Your conclusion is crucial. Spend time getting this right so the takeaway for the audience is powerful and memorable.*

I awarded Pat Kerr first place because her speech followed my requirements the best. She wrote as she would speak and her enthusiasm bubbled through the address. She had an interesting start and I liked her strong statement, 'New Zealand is unique, beautiful and accessible.' She also concludes with a satisfying remark – 'We welcome you.'

Pat assumes her audience knows little if anything about NZ, so she establishes where it is located, its population, history, lifestyle and achievements. While some of her examples given may not be the best available, I feel she has given our country a good recommendation. Well done Pat!

I awarded second place to Jean Shewan whose speech was also well written. She could have chosen a more arresting start, but she had a good flow of ideas and I liked her use of questions to arouse interest. Her personal story about migrating to live in NZ was powerful and effective, as a personal testimony takes some beating. She ends her speech on a warm and touching note.

Sadly, I could not give the other two entries a placing as they missed the point of the topic. One quoted five verses of our admirable national anthem which in some settings may be appropriate, but in this context would probably confuse listeners and lose their attention. The other entry focused on just one beautiful but obscure place in NZ rather than dealing with the whole country. Both entries were well written and would be effective in the right context.

First Place



Pat
Kerr

of Roxburgh

Aotearoa/New Zealand

No, not New Foundland...New Zealand!

No, not in the Atlantic Seaboard, but in the South Pacific, neighbour to Australia and Antarctica.

New Zealand is unique, beautiful and accessible.

Let me sell it to you as a wonderful place to live.

Kia ora everyone. Hello from New Zealand, known as the 'Land of the Long White Cloud'. On a clear day when you fly into Queenstown in the South Island you can see the whole country swathed in a white cloud. Below is a backbone of high mountains interspersed with clear blue lakes and dark forest, or bush, to the west. To the east are more lakes, mountain ridges, plains, rivers and beaches.

New Zealand consists of three main islands: North, South and Stewart Islands. The population is under five million (compare that to the UK which has a similar landmass but population 67 million). Approximately four million live in the northern part of the North Island so the rest of the country is sparsely populated.

Mori people preceded the Maoris as settlers in this land, followed in the 19th century by European whalers and sealers, international gold prospectors and then assisted settlers from the United Kingdom. Recent immigrants have been welcomed for their specialised talents in farming (sheep and dairying), engineering, winemaking and woollen crafts for example.

We enjoy freedom of speech, safety in the streets, a low unemployment rate, and a booming tourist industry due to international flights and enormous cruise ships. Occasionally we have an incident, earthquake, criminal or climatic event which sullies our clean-green image, but generally the comments are high praise for our scenery, friendly people and laid-back life-style: “She’ll be right!”

We enjoy world class fame: in education with Lord Rutherford splitting the atom; in athletics with Sir Peter Snell breaking the four minute mile; in music with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa singing at Prince Charles wedding to Diana Spencer; in sport with the All Blacks winning rugby’s World Cup for Rugby, and our sailors winning The America’s Cup. So opportunities and precedents for excellence exist.

Our government is based in the Beehive in the capital, Wellington. Our buzzy, sorry, busy, politicians, all 120 of them, cover the country in their electorates. We have two major parties, National (right wing) and Labour (left wing) with smaller parties enabling coalition parliaments like the current Labour led one under Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

Women hold top positions in politics, business (CEO for Antarctica NZ), and careers (fashion with Karen Walker). Top people achieve here through merit rather than wealth, heritage or gender.

New Zealand-made films include Sir Peter Jackson’s “Lord of the Rings”, Jane Campion’s “The Piano”, and Taika Waititi’s 2019 Oscar winning movie, “Jojo Rabbit”.

If you are looking for green pastures or a fresh start in a beautiful, sparsely populated country, then I suggest that you can do no better than try living in New Zealand.

We welcome you.

Second Place



Jean
Shewan
of
Christchurch

Freedom

Aotearoa, New Zealand, Land of the long white cloud offers everyone freedom. Freedom of speech, religious freedom and plenty of open space. Even though we are at the bottom of the world and a long distance from other places, we have all the advantages of the modern world, without most of the problems. There are good

communication systems, transport, good food and reasonable housing. We are a long way from any theatres of war, and society generally is not violent. Added to that, there are lots of opportunities to find work and to own your own land. Health services and social services, although under pressure are fairly easy to access.

So, what is everyday life like in our wonderful country? In most areas, apart from Auckland, the daily commute is less than thirty minutes, and many people are able to cycle or walk. The average traffic jam is about fifteen cars and delays are kept to a minimum. The education system is regularly reviewed to maintain reasonable standards and entry to tertiary education is cheaper than in most other places. We have the laws necessary to maintain a civilized society, and our government is stable and reasonably free from corruption.

Leisure activities are numerous and available to all. Most sporting codes have organized competitions and there are many sporting grounds close to most suburbs. We have beautiful beaches – both surfing and swimming – and plenty of bush walks and opportunities to interact with nature. Road transport to most places is available and roads are generally good. If you want to be a tourist, there are plenty of opportunities for adventure activities such as bungee jumping, white water rafting, mountaineering and jet boating.

Not convinced? We like most places are grappling with global warming. We do not have much heavy industry, and we have worked hard to keep air and water pollution to a minimum. Our government continually reviews standards for businesses and the farming community. We have at least five large areas designated as national parks, and many parts of our coasts are marine reserves. Most places have recycling programmes. Climate change is having an impact on our water supplies and our coastlines, but we work hard here and with our Pacific neighbours to reduce our carbon emissions.

I can only add my own experience of living in New Zealand. I came from England, with my family as a 12 year old. Yes, there were lots of things that were different and we had to adjust to a different pace of life, but the opportunities and the relaxed way of life easily outweighed the differences. Whenever I return from overseas to New Zealand, I'm struck again by the wide skies, the easy way of life and the friendliness of the locals.

If you want to know more, enquire at your nearest New Zealand embassy, or go on line for illustrations of all I've described to you. Best of all, come and see for yourself. You will be welcomed with open arms.

Competitions for June 2020

Due by May 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: Beginning with the phrase, 'I was walking along, minding my own business, when suddenly...', write a story that has all the appearance of being a thriller but ends with a comical twist in the tale. 500 words.

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org



Debbie

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Interview a grandparent in your locality (not one of your own family members) and ask about five values he or she would most like to teach parents of today. With his or her permission, write an article in a Question and Answer (Q&A) style. 250 – 300 words.

Email entry to Janice Gillgren at level2@nzchristianwriters.org



Janice

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Debate the topic: 'There is no place for Christians in politics'. Be sure to give both sides of the debate. 300 words maximum.

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.