

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2020

THE CHRISTIAN Writer

SEE INSIDE FOR

Wellington Written Seminar Report

A Radio Voice for Your Book

Lockdown Blessings

Book Reviews:
Barnabas the Cathedral Cat
Twelve Tales For You

How Do You Know It's Something
That Will Be Published?

You've Written an Awesome Book,
What Now?

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

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- 1) Digital magazine: Full membership \$40 / Student membership (up to 25yrs) \$20
- 2) Printed magazine: Full membership \$55 / Student membership (up to 25yrs) \$35

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 as a word document attachment 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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This issue was printed by

BookPrint.

Making Bookshop Quality Easy

7/1 Greenwich Way
Unsworth Heights
Auckland, New Zealand

09 443 1775
amy@bookprint.co.nz
www.bookprint.co.nz

The Christian Writer

Aug – Sep 2020

ISSN 2537-8708 (Online)

VOL 37. No 4

ISSN 1171-0098 (Print)

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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



Earlier this year we launched our newest magazine, *Young Christian Writer*, with a focus of reaching younger writers, from teenagers to students. We

distributed complimentary copies to several Christian schools throughout New Zealand, and have received wonderful words of encouragement from principals, teachers and school leaders. It sounds like there is a genuine need in the educational community for a resource that can equip and release young writers in their writing talents.

This new magazine is a significant milestone in our legacy for NZ Christian Writers as we pursue our purpose and vision to cultivate, encourage and inspire a vibrant community of Christian writers throughout New Zealand. A massive thank you is deserved for our brilliant magazine editor, Kathryn Drinkwater, who shares her God-given gifts of inspiration, writing, interviewing, collaborating and coordinating to make this magazine a source of inspiration to student members. If you know a young Christian writer, encourage them to join our Student Membership and receive their own magazine, by completing our online form or membership form PDF: www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/

Recently we've also heard from several writers who are keen to connect again on a personal level for inspiration and to learn new skills to improve their writing. As we all missed out on Retreat 2020, we are delighted to announce we will be hosting Retreat 2021 and our AGM 2021 at Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga. We welcome your RSVP and registration so we can plan ahead for our time together. Registrations are now open and can be made using the following link: www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2021/

On the home front, my wife Sara-Maria and I are excited to share that we are expanding our young family. Baby number three is due in early-December, and we praise God for this early Christmas gift. Both our daughters, Maxima and Vivianna, are anticipating the arrival of a younger sibling. We are blessed as we reflect and embrace the truth of Psalm 127:3, NKJV: *Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward*. Please do continue to keep us in your prayers as we embark on the adventure of life with a young and growing family.

Blessings
Justin St Vincent

BOOK
TODAY!

NZ CHRISTIAN
writers

RETREAT

APRIL 29TH - MAY 2ND 2021

FLAXMILL RETREAT CENTRE · WHITIANGA



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MCLEAN**



**KAREN
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**EUGENE
MOREAU**



**PHIL
STRONG**

BOOK TODAY AT
www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2021

Notices

NZCW Retreat 2021

Our Writers Retreat will be at Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga *Thursday 29th April to Sunday 2nd May 2021*. Please visit www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2021/ to register. Attendees are encouraged to carpool. We anticipate having a great learning and social time together. See the poster on page five for our exciting list of guest speakers.

Book Reviews Criteria

Members are welcome to request a book review for any of their published books, whether recently released or not. The main criteria is that the book has some Christian relevancy. For more information on how to have your book reviewed in *The Christian Writer* please refer to page two.

YOU ARE INVITED TO A DOUBLE BOOK LAUNCH!



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What's life on earth really like? Who are we? What are we doing here? What are our idols? What's the future hold? And much more! George reflects on many aspects of living on this planet.

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Roger Moses, CNZM, past Principal of Wellington College

"The story of one man's pilgrimage in search of meaning, justice and peace. It's challenging, thoughtful, even provocative, and full of wisdom."

Very Rev Ray Coster, past Moderator of the NZ Presbyterian Church



George Bryant, QSM, is one of New Zealand's leading authors on people and society. He has written 43 books and booklets and has qualifications in education, theology and management, and a Master's degree in English.



Joan Bryant, is a graduate of the University of Queensland and has taught high schools in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. She is a violinist, spiritual director and is currently an elder at St Enoch's Presbyterian Church, Tauranga. *Free to be Me* is an account of her life journey.

WHEN:

Saturday, August 22, 2.30pm to 4pm

WHERE:

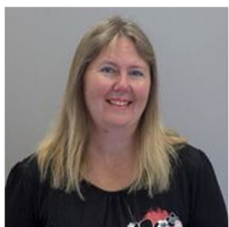
East City Wesleyan Church,
219 Burswood Drive, Botany

Please let George or Joan know
if you can/can't attend

- no later than **Wed August 19** by emailing
him/her at bryantgw@xtra.co.nz
or bryantjoal@gmail.com
or phoning 07 544 1667 or 027 314 6690.

Editorial: A Journey of Learning

by Kathryn Drinkwater



Being a writer will always be an ongoing journey of learning. Ten years ago, my children's novel, *Dog Tucker*, was accepted by Scholastic NZ to be published and I was like a leaf dropped into a flowing stream. I just went along for the ride, surprised by what I found around each corner. I'd read about being published, I'd been told what to expect, but reading and hearing about riding river rapids is quite different from doing it! After each unexpected twist or turn, I'd often be saying to myself, *If only I'd known that, or thought that through better, I'd have done such-and-such*. It was a good journey of learning and Scholastic NZ did a great job.

Over the years since, I've become more aware of the overall picture of publishing. I've especially grown in experience over the past eighteen months, receiving great coaching from our previous magazine editor, Debbie McDermott, to take on her role. Our magazine also has the benefit of experienced proofreaders who help me ensure the magazine is of good standard. I learn from them in each issue!

Another way I love to learn is by observing other writers on their journey and learning from them. That's why I'm keen to print members' publishing stories in this magazine so we can all learn from each other. I often check the library for good books on how to write. This year, I've been able to absorb helpful pointers from two more books, one on how to plot and one on writing screenplays.

I've experimented a little with the internet but have found it overwhelming and not always trustworthy. However, I'm aware those are waters I'm going to need to learn to navigate sooner or later if I really want to get *Dog Tucker*, (currently out of print and not an e-book), moving again.

I love reading and learning from the annual *Writers and Artists Yearbook*. Today I was excited to sign up online to a similar resource called *The Christian Writers Market Guide*. I paid \$9.99 USD for an annual subscription and it gave me access to a directory of traditional book publishers and independent (self) publishers plus numerous other helpful lists. Their website also advertises a lot of writing courses available through Christian Writers Institute. For example, there was one that may interest some NZCW members called, *How to Make a Living as an Author*. If you'd like to check it out visit www.christianwritersmarketguide.com.

Our coming Writers Retreat is another great place to learn. I'm looking forward to meeting many of you as we continue this wonderful journey of learning together.

I love to hear from our members. If you'd like to write to me or submit a contribution please email: editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Professional Writing Services

Free advertising! Are you a member who can offer other members a professional service relating to writing or book publishing? If so, you are welcome to send in your advertisement – maximum 100 words, to editor@nzchristianwriters.org.

ANNA'S EDITING

I'm excited to offer my services to you as a proofreader and copy editor. Working with authors to help produce a professional finish and to make their writing shine is my passion.

I achieved my Diploma in Proofreading and Copy Editing (with Excellence) in 2016 and also successfully completed a Copy Editing for Fiction course. It has been a delight since to work on a variety of interesting projects.

Feel free to check me out at: facebook.com/Annas Editing.Co/ to learn more and to read author reviews.

Anna Cullen: 021 717903.

E: annas.editing.int@gmail.com

ASTUTE EDITING

Candice Hume

E: info@astuteediting.co.nz

A WORD ABOUT EDITING

I am a freelance editor having received a Diploma of Proofreading and Editing from NZIBS in 2012. I have edited a large range of documents including novels, biographies, magazine articles, websites, and university assignments.

In August 1968, while beginning teacher training, Jesus Christ changed my heart and the whole direction of my life. I am passionate about working with Christian writers, helping them polish their work until it shines.

I endeavour to read the writer's intentions, not just their words, helping them shape their writing into a more accurate, natural and pleasing form.

Graham Pedersen: 0274405851

E: gpetersen@hotmail.co.nz

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Lissa Weight: 021 0851 6944

E: lydiaweight@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN EDITING

My name is Iola Goulton and I run Christian Editing Services.

I hold a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in marketing and have twenty years' experience in human resources, including writing and editing a company newsletter, developing a government website, contributing to a textbook, and writing and proofreading more client reports than I can count.

I specialise in editing Christian fiction and advising pre-published and self-published authors on the business side of writing, publishing and marketing. Find out more at <https://christianediting.co.nz/resources/> or <https://christianediting.co.nz/blog/> and sign up for a free two-week course on revising and self-editing your novel.

Iola Goulton

E: igoulton@christianediting.co.nz

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Visit www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published/#publish_or_print and download the free guide to self-publishing.

WRITING ANSWERS

I have 20 years of experience as a copy editor and proof reader. I work on non-fiction books/articles/memoirs and also academic editing/proof reading.

I work with authors to prepare their work for self-publishing. I make sure their documents are print ready and, for example, I tell them that they do need to use mirror margins on their documents and no, the printer won't do that for you.

I have qualifications in technical and professional communication, editing and proof reading, science and laboratory technology.

I am in my happy place when editing and thoroughly enjoy turning people's prose into award winning documents.

Janette Busch

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

Wellington Written Seminar Report

by Paul Devereux

Wellington Written 2020 (Retreat) at Silverstream Retreat, Upper Hutt, Wellington, held Saturday 13th June, 9am to 2pm.



For our first event, we were very happy with the 16 people who attended in person and the 14 who attended online via Zoom. This event doubled as our monthly meeting. It was good to see three new faces at the table and have a chance for conversations over tea, coffee and cake around the three teaching sessions.

The three presenters were very inspiring and informative, as follows:

First up was Susan Holt who told us about her self-publishing experiences. She described the process and benefits of doing the hard yards herself. It's not necessarily about doing it all yourself – it's wise to bring in other professionals for tasks such as editing, proofreading, graphics and printing.

Susan told us how her two books were inspired by her dreams. She described her very interesting background receiving initial training as an actor and performer, and how she records audio books, including her own.

Most recently, she has been recording an audio biography for a mature lady who was very keen to get her story presented in this way. Susan also referenced her lead role in a Salvation Army commercial. All experiences have developed her writing style and passion.

After morning tea, we heard from Anya McKee talking about the steps to publishing. This contrasted well with Susan's presentation on self-publishing. Anya shared her experiences as a writer and a publisher (Torn Curtain Publishing). She was able to show us her work in progress of a children's book, written by one of our Wellington Group members, who Anya is working with to reach publication. An exciting time for Jo as this is her first book! We learnt about different styles of publishing ranging from more hands-on publishers such as Torn Curtain Publishing, through to very commercial publishers where the author pays for the publisher to do everything. Anya was very passionate and shared about her Spirit-led methods of only ever encouraging the writer.

Our last presenter was Paul Devereux, who shared about God's communication methods in the Hebrew language. The central theme was how God uses physical pictures to illustrate spiritual truths. He explained about the three levels of meaning within a word and, in turn, the three types of meaning at each of those levels. We learnt about two words in detail – the word AWT meaning 'miraculous sign', and BYT meaning 'family in the house'. AWT points us to God's ultimate destination for humanity, while BYT describes what that destination is – the bride dwelling with the Son in the house of the Father. He needed a bigger whiteboard and a lot more time as he had so much more to share, with a lot of encouragement and interest from the audience.

The benefits of hearing from three speakers, though brief, were well worth the time and effort. It encourages us to host other events for locals to participate in to provide more in-depth learning than we could otherwise have in our regular monthly meetings.

While a bit of effort to setup and manage, using Zoom to stream online allowed a lot more people to 'attend' than would otherwise have been possible, including visitors from Taranaki, Whakatane and Auckland, as well as a few of our own Wellington members. Questions were raised in the Zoom chat and asked of the speakers, as well as encouragement and thanks shared in the same way. Perhaps the greatest blessing that we received was from one of the Zoomers, who said, 'Thank you so much for opening up this workshop via Zoom. I haven't been able to attend a workshop for years so today has been hugely encouraging'.

Lunch at the end of the retreat was a good opportunity for informal getting to know people and to hear their stories over a hearty meal. We are looking forward to a longer retreat next time (possibly later this year), with more time allowed for participation and interaction, storytelling and hearing.

If you missed out on attending this seminar, we have great news for you! You can watch a recording of it by clicking on this link: <https://youtu.be/120mEbxLAIk>

A Radio-Voice for Your Book

As so often happens, it was a phone call out of the blue that changed the direction of Rob Holding's life. On the other end of the phone was Johan Jansen van Vuuren, the National Director for Ariel Ministries New Zealand.

"Rob," he said, "Dr Arnold Fruchtenbaum wants to turn his books into audiobooks and I think you've got the perfect voice to do that."

18 months and nearly a million words later Rob has recorded, narrated and edited 10 books for four very diverse ministries and is enjoying the challenge.



"Years ago, people who didn't know I was in radio would ask me what I did for a living," says Rob. "My answer was usually something like, I play music and talk to some of the most interesting people in the world. Now I can tell them I sit in a small padded room talking to people that aren't there."

Rob says it is not quite as simple as that but, with the arrival of distributors like Audible and Christian Audio, more and more people are looking to listen to their books instead of reading them.

"My wife Sharon and I clean at the local primary school," he says. "I have utilised that time to listen to: *The Lord of the Rings*, *God's Smuggler*, a biography of A. W. Tozer, John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* etc. And that's on top of the books I actually sit down and read."

A *Forbes* magazine article from July last year showed that the audiobook industry continues to boom. Data from the Audio Publishers Association shows that US publishers reported audiobook sales in 2018 at nearly a billion dollars, a revenue figure that has grown a full 24.5% over the previous 12 months. Those numbers mark the seventh year in a row that the audiobook industry has seen double-digit growth.

According to the *Guardian*, Brits downloaded nearly 3bn hours of audiobooks in 2018. Most libraries in New Zealand now offer their customer audiobook options on more and more titles.

Because the cost of converting a book into an audiobook is comparatively low, the profit margin is higher. Unlike hard copy, there are no 'reprinting' costs for audiobooks. Once you have secured the material it is available until you or the publisher withdraw the book from the market. It's always in stock.

Rob says narrating some of the books has been a bit of a challenge "One book read like a chemistry text book written by a highbrow English philosophy lecturer." He laughs. "While the content was great, it was 'replete with sesquipedalian loquaciousness'".

Though he is usually able to make the text come alive by injecting his own personality into the pages, Rob says, "When you narrate a book you have to do so as if it is your own, which is quite a big responsibility, because the author is trusting you with their creative work."

Rob is offering a free demonstration chapter to all members of New Zealand Christian Writers. Contact Rob direct on 027 4509421 or robholdingnz@gmail.com. Also view his advertisement on page eight in the Professional Writing Services column.

WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian Writing of
today and yesteryear-

Series by Frederick Swallow



Bishop Edward Bickersteth

Bishop Edward Henry Bickersteth held many high offices in the Church of England and graduated with high honours from Trinity College, in Cambridge.

During his full and fruitful life he edited hymnals for the Anglican Church, edited a dictionary of hymnology and made extended mission tours to Japan, India and the Middle East

He wrote:

**Light of the World Shine on
our Lives*

*Thy Grace to us Make Known
And While we Meet to Sing
(write) thy Truth*

Be Thou our Teacher Lord

At 81 in 1906 he met the one he centred his writing on.

**Tune; How Sweet the Name of Jesus
Sounds.*

Lockdown Blessings

by Clare Matravers

Genesis 50:20-21 ... intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then don't be afraid. I will provide for you ...

The virus may have been the enemy's attempt to isolate us but God has used it for good. Online church services can reach more of the general public than a physical service. I have heard of a virus-ridden person witnessing to the medical staff who attended him, and they became Christians. For me personally, lockdown had many blessings.

I didn't have to worry about or listen to the traffic: although I still had to work as a merchandiser, it was bliss being able to stroll across the near empty roads on my commute. For over a month, I didn't touch a pedestrian crossing button.

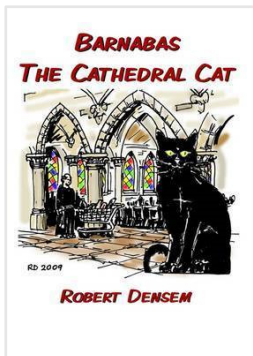
Although I needed my car at first (I didn't want to walk around in the early morning dark), after that it sat idle—there was no stress about driving in traffic or worrying if the old car would misbehave.

I saved money: initially I missed the visits to the cafes, the flat whites and the takeaways but it didn't take long before I barely thought about them. Instead I treated myself to supermarket goodies, at a fraction of the price. And there was no need to buy petrol.

Lockdown provided the perfect excuse not to do the necessary things I don't enjoy: such as going for dental or medical check-ups, getting a haircut or going shopping.

I didn't have to go out to church: I could watch a service on TV while eating my breakfast and getting dressed. And I could use the bathroom or get a drink of water without disturbing other people.

There were few interruptions—naturally no unexpected visitors. I had the perfect excuse to stay at home, read or write books, have afternoon naps and be my introverted self.



Barnabas the Cathedral Cat

By Robert Densem

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Imag-ic
Auckland 2009

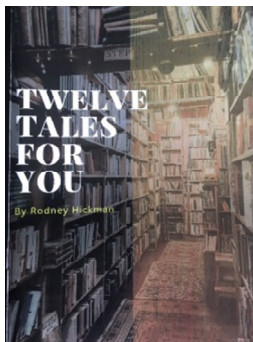
A delightful story for children about a cat named Barnabas who made his home in the environment of a cathedral.

The story follows his abandonment as a kitten, adoption by the Bishop, his amusing antics and participation in cathedral life and events, a rival friendship, love match, procreation and final days.

Themes such as kindness, resourcefulness, bullying, arrogance and courage are woven throughout the story in subtle and entertaining ways.

As a chorister in a cathedral for 20 years, the author is familiar with all the goings-on of the 'living, breathing community'. At the end he includes sketches of a typical cathedral and its layout. He also adds a helpful glossary explaining the meaning of words and roles associated with such a place.

I can imagine this book becoming a firm favourite with children, especially being read to them by an adult.



Twelve Tales For You

By Rodney Hickman

Review by Julia Martin

Self Published 2020

The recent Covid-19 lockdown has been a profitable time for many creative people, and Rodney is no exception.

Known for his numerous poetry books, he has tried his hand at storytelling and this self-published varied collection of 12 short stories is the result. As light reading, I found them entertaining and memorable and look forward to a further collection.

Available from the author.

Email: rodneyhickmanpoet@gmail.com

\$13.00 including postage

\$6.00 PDF file emailed

NZCW ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

It's time for those with an
August annual magazine
subscription to renew. A reminder
will arrive via email or post.
Thank you for your support as a
valued member of our
collective.

Been a While Comin'...

My Journey to Becoming Published

by Sherri Bee

In my late thirties, I decided to write fully illustrated stories about my stepson's pet rat. Within a year, I got the idea for another series – adventure books aimed at intermediate-age readers. An idea for yet another type of book emerged after that. With so many ideas floating around my head, my dilemma became: Which do I try to publish first?



Meanwhile, two of my sisters published books. One sister had taken the self-publishing route with her book, *Timothy Tui and the Southern Ocean Special* (Geraldine Paul). The other, *Dog Tucker* (K. Drinkwater), was published by Scholastic NZ Ltd. I could see the pros and cons of each method. When published by an established company the waiting for approval and much longer timeframe to publish are balanced by a good distribution base with some marketing included. Self-publishing offered a much shorter timeframe with more control over the book but potentially could result in a substandard product if not created or written well. In addition, with the latter, marketing and distribution would likely require more time and finance.

I finally settled on completing *The Glint*, the first book of the adventure series. By the time it was ready to publish, Amazon's Createspace had merged with Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP). As someone proficient with computers, I found the uploading process relatively easy. I made a point of reading the KDP 'Community' conversations, where users had already asked many questions.

KDP does not do editing or typesetting. You must prepare a properly edited manuscript, including all front and back matter, and a separate cover, but KDP has excellent instructions to help you. There are options for ISBN numbers. You can use your own cover art, or one of KDP's generic covers. The drawback to the latter is that if you want to offer your book elsewhere, you cannot take the KDP cover with you. Various document formats are accepted for your manuscript.

The online previewer shows you exactly how it is going to look. It can then be saved as a draft or submitted. If you want proofs of a printed book, you need to order them *before* hitting the 'submit for review' button – as I found out! As a newbie, I found KDP staff helpful. Some things cannot be changed once submitted. Your book goes through a submission review process which is only a basic quality check. It doesn't mean they read your book! Then you can order author copies at printing cost, but these do not earn Amazon royalties.

The process for choosing a selling price is streamlined, easy to follow, and currency conversions are automated. One can set different prices for different locations. As to how good your book is, this is ultimately determined by customers' reviews and feedback, and of course, sales.

Due to Covid-19, shipping directly from Amazon to NZ can be expensive. However, NZ Post has a facility called Youshop through which one can have goods sent to one's own Youshop address at a warehouse within the USA (or UK). Then NZ Post ships the goods to NZ. It is free to get a Youshop account and can decrease shipping costs.

After successfully creating my self-published print-on-demand paperback, I created a linked eBook version, also through KDP. It has been a big learning curve, but my first publishing experience has been exciting and pleasurable! To check out *The Glint* click this link:

https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/0473519895/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_image_o00_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1

Online Writing Courses

by John Fergusson

I thought I could write...

...until I watched Jerry Jenkins edit a page. He read it through—the piece looked fine. Then he took it apart. Removing redundancies and explanations, ditching passives, and shuffling sentences, he cut 30% until the text sprang to life.

Crash Course

I'd wanted to write about King Solomon for years. One day in February 2012, our pastor said, "If you've had something in your heart for a long time, it's probably God."

I researched online writing courses and joined the **Jerry Jenkins Writers Guild**. Author of nearly 200 books including the Christian *Left Behind* series, Jerry's experience, wisdom, and clear teaching were a revelation. I began to learn how to show and not tell, create memorable characters, design plot, attract agents, write non-fiction proposals and build platforms.

Their goal is to improve your writing so you'll win traditional contracts. They offer manuscript repair and rewrite, interviews with industry professionals, 'office hours' with Jerry, regular blogs, and in-depth instruction.

To keep it personal, Jenkins only opens membership twice a year, currently NZ\$60 a month, also giving access to the backlist resources. If you want your hand held, their *My Novel Blueprint* gives step-by-step training and feedback.

Christian Alternatives

HopeWriters offer teaching, Facebook membership, an online video library, and an invitation to small groups. The \$1 start-up is enticing, but the monthly fee is NZ\$75.

You can join **WordWeavers** for just NZ\$72 annually. They focus on community and critique groups called 'chapters', using their useful-looking 'Sandwich Critique Method.'

For a similar fee, **Inspire Christian Writers** gives guidance on craft, 'writing tight', plot and character.

The **Christian Writers Institute** provides excellent and well-priced courses. They produce an annual *Christian Writers Market Guide*, listing publishers, agents, contests and more. Their amusing podcast teacher, Thomas Umstattd Jr., has taught me heaps about marketing.

Other Helpful Sites

The free **Grammarly** tidies your blogs and online writing, but I love **ProWritingAid**, an add-in to MS Word. It's not cheap, but the programme checks grammar, clichés, structure, style and much more while you write. Their emails are full of useful information.

Multiple free sites focus on self-publishing. **Reedsy's** emails are always informative. Their website lists editors, designers, publicists and any other help you may need.

If you have a favourite site let us know through NZ Christian Writers. I still can't write—but I am better than I was.

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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:

Anna Cullen

Timaru

Lorin Hona

Dargaville

Jess McLeod

Gisborne

Debbie Osborne

New Plymouth

Owen Pauling

Whitianga

Kerri Price

Tauranga

Ferne

Rajanayagam

Auckland

Anneta

Vysotskaya

Lower Hutt

New members please email your photo and mini bio for your free NZCW website profile to Justin:

president@nzchristianwriters.org

NZCW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

Will be done digitally via Zoom on Saturday 12th September, 1:00-1:30pm. All members are welcome to join.

Zoom Meeting ID: 242-621-066

A digital record and President's Annual Report will appear in *The Christian Writer* magazine, Oct-Nov 2020.

How Do You Know It's Something That Will Be Published?

by Steve Laube from Steve Laube Agency, Phoenix, Arizona, USA

A common question we agents get is, 'How do you *know*?' Or as Bob Hostetler put it, 'When you know, how do you know?'

The answer is extremely subjective and each agent, just like a consumer, will see an idea or read a book differently. After thinking about this question, I believe it comes down to three things.

Instinct

For me it is an instinct that comes from reading voraciously for many years. After a while you start identifying the markers of which books were worth the time and which ones were not.

Instinct can be described as an innate impulse, something that cannot necessarily be taught but is something that can be learned. Can I describe it? Not really. It is truly a gut feeling.

Am I right every time? How many LOLs would be too many to write? Ask *any* editor or agent about the 'one they let get away'. But that's part of the industry.

Once, I sent a proposal I thought was marvellous to a variety of editors. One wrote back within an hour saying, 'There is nothing new here. Pass.' An hour later a different editor from a different publisher wrote, 'This fellow is the best writer I've read since Philip Yancey!' Guess which one contracted the book?

Experience

My experience, even that instinct, has been bred through many decades of working within the bookselling industry. Back in my bookstore days, it was that feeling when I held a new release in my hands and the title, cover, and description all shouted, 'Bestseller'. *The Beginner's Bible* was one. I was the national buyer for the chain at the time. I had only ordered a few copies for each store initially. But when I saw it? Wow! I immediately ordered hundreds of copies for the chain, enough to build a small endcap stack in each store. It quickly became the #1 bestselling children's book in the industry.

After a while you begin to know, from experience, which topics, genres, titles, etc have that special 'snap' to them. The feeling, nay, the *knowing*, that this is the one.

Today that 'feeling' happens at the proposal stage. It happens with clients all the time since they, too, have the experience and the instinct of what works, which is why they are published regularly. It also happens with the occasional unsolicited proposal.

In fiction it is a combination of brilliant writing (the kind where I don't realize I'm reading anymore but am inside that world painted by the words of the author). This is a high threshold for the debut author. If the author is already established and coming to me for new or first-time representation, their sales history and network comes into the discussion.

In nonfiction I react like a consumer:

Does the title grab me? (It's that quick.) Is the topic a saleable one? Does the author bring something special to the table? At the same time, I'm thinking of our publishing partners, which ones would find this of interest? Which marketing team and editorial team could get behind the project?

If all those cylinders are firing at once, then my interest is piqued.

I also look at whether this author is a one-book wonder (nothing wrong with that!) or if there is potential here for a long and successful career.

Blind Luck (or Providence, depending on your theology)

I don't mean to be cavalier about God's providence. I hope you understand the point. Sometimes a book is successful without people having anything to do with it. There are cases inside our agency where I thought a proposal from another agent's client was unlikely to find a home, only to be proven wrong by a tremendous new contract for that author's project.

Or there have been times where I thought something might have a modest response in the market only to end up selling over 200,000 copies in less than a year.

Think of some of our industry's bestselling books. *Left Behind* was thought to be an okay idea, but no one predicted 70 million in sales. *The Shack* was rejected by everyone, so was initially self-published. Who could have predicted that *Jesus Calling* would still be on the bestseller list over 10 years since it was released?

For that matter, did you buy Microsoft stock when it was trading for less than \$20 a share in 2009? This is an old saying: 'Even a blind squirrel will find a nut once in a while.' I'm not sure whether I'm the squirrel or the nut. I'll let you decide.

The Bottom Line

The bottom line is to be right more often than not and our agency's longevity and successful authors have been humbling to watch. (That's where God's providence and provision are on display.)

The post [How Do You Know It's Something That Will Be Published?](#) appeared first on [The Steve Laube Agency](#). (Republished with permission.)

Continue on to the next page to read Steve Laube's feedback for NZ Christian Writers.

Note from NZCW Magazine Editor: I recently signed up my email address to The Steve Laube Agency. This means I can receive helpful blog articles such as the one I've shared with you on pages 17-18. Then I wrote to Steve Laube and asked on behalf of NZ Christian Writers the following question:

Do you have any advice for Christian writers who struggle to get 'lift-off' in a small population such as ours? It seems to me we need to think big and aim for 'world-wide' but the question many writers here ask is, how can little flightless kiwi birds find wings? Do agencies such as yours take on writers from other countries?

Here is Steve’s helpful and positive response for us Kiwis:

Our agency represents David Rawlings, Narelle Atkins and Carolyn Miller who are all from Australia. We also represent authors from both Canada and the UK. In addition, under my science fiction publishing company (Enclave) we are releasing Kristen Young's new book this Fall. She is also from 'down under'. Enclave also publishes authors from Canada and South Africa.

Location is generally not as much an issue in fiction. Non-fiction it can be for books if the author cannot bring a sizeable audience (platform) with them to the table. I suggest that those with a modest platform seek out the periodical market first. Then they can develop a following and build a resume of bylines. Their work gets read and they are not encumbered by the market forces of book-length projects. It's a place to start anyway.

Clues Across: Crossword Supplied by Eion Field (solution page 22)

6. Aid to accurate spelling **8.** Senior church member **10.** An anaesthetic **13.** Important part of church history **14.** Strength like that of Samson **17.** Commerce **19.** Of interest and value

		1		2		3		4		5
	6									
7										
8			9			10	11			
					12					
13										
14		15		16		17		18		
19										

Clues Down:

- 1.** ‘Seek and you shall ...’
- 2.** Guide for wise men
- 3.** Theme of 1 Corinthians 13
- 4.** Way to be followed, on foot
- 5.** Flowering shrub
- 7.** Censure
- 9.** Old Testament man who ‘walked with God’
- 11.**A teacher
- 12.**Unit of electrical current (abbrev.)
- 15.**Door of the sheepfold
- 16.**Nazareth was one
- 17.**When Jesus died, the curtain of the temple was ...
- 18.**Persistent pain

You've Written an Awesome Book!

What now?

Tips on self-publishing from Ray Curle, Wild Side Publishing.

There are many very talented Christian writers in NZ and there has been an upsurge in NZ authors self-publishing in recent years. Although the NZ market is very small, some authors have done reasonably well, and have at least covered their printing costs (and even their production costs) with local sales. Others have made some classic mistakes and have a wardrobe or garage stacked with unsold books. I would like to help you to avoid such mistakes and encourage you to prayerfully consider some necessary steps ahead of self-publishing:



1. Count the cost (Luke 14:28).

Firstly check with the Lord. Has he asked you to write a book or is just a whim? Your time spent writing can mean less valuable time with your children (or family). *If* the Lord is with you, he will help you. Set aside or raise between \$3000 and \$5000 to cover the costs of production, printing and marketing your book.

2. Who is your audience?

If you are not specific as to who your target age group, gender and type of reader is, your book could miss the mark. Start with researching writing tips like the guidelines from Rosie Boom: Click: <https://www.rosieboom.com/category/writing>

3. Check out how to self-edit your book

Iola Goulton has a free editing course available from www.christianediting.co.nz

4. Contact a reputable self-publishing company

Unless you're a famous All-Black or a well-known published author, traditional publishers are unlikely to help you, let alone reply to you. And don't do what so many have done (and regretted it forever) by going to a 'self-publishing' outfit overseas. They will charge you an arm and a leg. Books you order from them will have a ridiculously high unit cost (because of shipping) and Christian stores will not purchase them as the RRP (and 40% wholesale price) will have to be set too high to cover your costs. At Wild Side Publishing we have had countless authors come to us, almost in tears, because they made the mistake of 'publishing overseas'.

Authors have been charged up to three times what a NZ outfit would charge and their books do not get marketed in NZ or overseas. In New Zealand I know of three reputable Christian self-publishing companies (or organisations). They are Castle Publishing, DayStar Books and ourselves, Wild Side Publishing. At the beginning of your discussion, ask about marketing. If you get a few hundred books printed and don't make them available to stores and libraries, or market them, you will not recover your costs and will have boxes of books under your bed!

5. Cover design and layout

Books with homemade-looking covers don't sell. Your publisher will recommend a professional book cover designer (who hopefully will create exciting back cover text). Then your manuscript will need to be proofread (again) and laid out professionally in a format the printers require.

6. Printing

Your publisher will get you the best quotes to get your book printed locally. If you are not a preacher, teacher or ministry person (who tours about selling your own books) only order 250 or so. If you think you will sell heaps yourself then order what you can afford to get the lowest unit price.

7. Distribution

Unless your publisher has an arrangement to get your book promoted and supplied to Christian stores (and NZ Libraries) you have a problem. Find out!

8. Worldwide listing of your book on amazon.com, bookdepository.com and elsewhere

You can have your book uploaded to an international wholesale distribution platform which means they handle on-demand orders from overseas and you don't have to post from your NZ stock which is far too expensive. Don't post from NZ!

9. Marketing

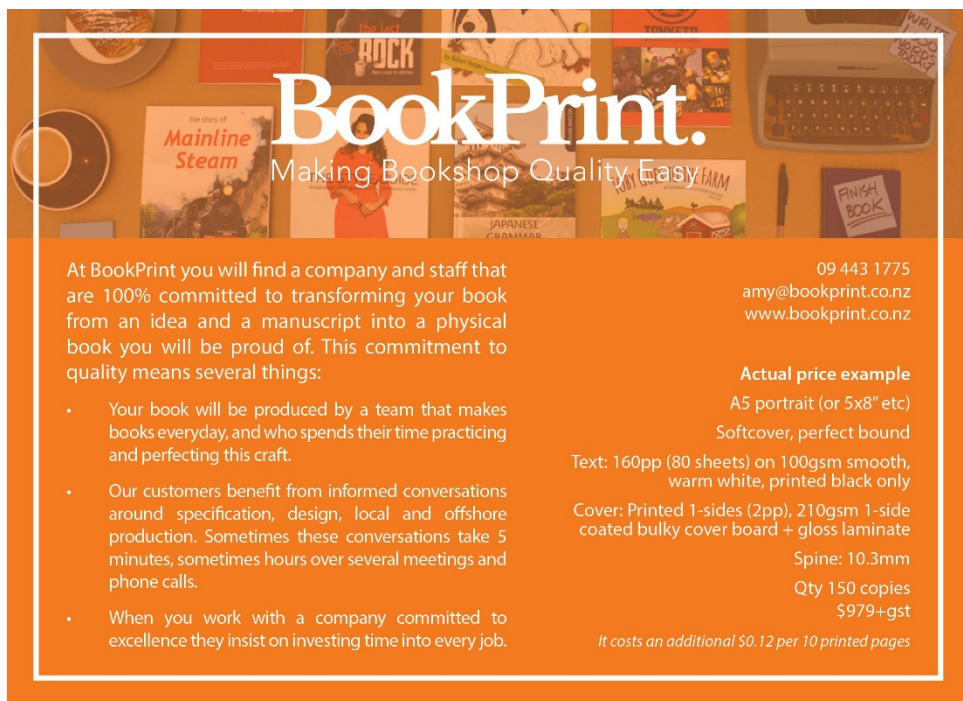
Unless you budget to promote your book via MailChimp to stores and the Christian marketplace, no one will know your books exist or where to buy one. Targeted FaceBook advertising is also important. It is possible to get low cost, professional marketing.

A full guide to how to self-publish, understand the processes and get an idea of costs is here: <https://www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published>

I trust the above has been helpful for those new to self-publishing. God bless you as you put pen to paper and enjoy the rollercoaster!

Crossword Solution for page 20

Across: 6.Dictionary 8.Elder 10.Ether 13.Reformation 14.Might 17.Trade 19.Noteworthy
Down: 1.Find 2.Star 3.Love 4.Path 5.Hydrangea 7.Reprimand 9.Enoch 11.Tutor 12.Amp
15.Gate 16.Town 17.Torn 18.Ache



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Writing Competitions Points Board

In each magazine competition, place-getters receive points: 15 points for first, 12 points for second and 9 points for third. At the end of May and November, highest points in Levels One and Two are awarded monetary prizes for first, second and third. Level Three points are tallied at the end of November. To be **promoted** to Level Two or Three, contestants need to receive points at least three times on their current level. Our judges also require regular entries and improved writing. Prize-winners will be published in the Dec 2020-Jan 2021 edition. **Prizes are: \$60 for First Place, \$50 for Second Place \$40 for Third place.**

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Jill Clarke	15	Allison Wilson	15	John Lindsay	39
Jackie Davey	12	Pauline Marshall	12	Jean Shewan	30
Ricolene Gounden	9			Pat Kerr	30
				Lois Farrow	24
				Keith Willis	12
				Sue Thatcher	9

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Research and (if possible) interview a Christian organisation or individual making a positive contribution to your community. Then, with their permission, write an engaging article suitable for a secular newspaper or magazine on the work they do. Give your article a catchy title and make sure you only focus on three to four points in order to make the most of the limited word count. Include a photo if you wish. 300 words.

General Comments

Congratulations to the three contestants who entered this competition. Your articles are well-written, informative, interesting, unpreachy and suitable for publication in a secular newspaper or magazine. They are also a tribute to those individuals who have made a real difference in the community. Such people are truly inspiring and deserve all the recognition, encouragement and support we can give them if they are to remain motivated to continue doing the work they do.

I was particularly pleased to receive three completely different entries as this added to the interest factor. Jill Clarke wrote about an adapted Alpha Course for disabled people, Jackie Davey about the Salvation Army Bridge and Food Bank programmes, and Ricolene Gounder about the community outreach of a 12-year-old girl during the COVID-19 lockdown. The first two appear to have been carefully researched, whereas Ricolene personally interviewed the subject of her article.

Points to note and remember:

- 1. The best titles are those which are kept as short and punchy as possible. While each of the three competition entries has a catchy title, Ricolene's is somewhat long and would probably be changed by a newspaper/magazine editor.*
- 2. When writing about a certain location, it is important to clearly convey this information to your reader by including the name of the community, town or area in your article. Of the three contestants, Jackie did this best.*
- 3. When conducting research, you should include a bibliography/footnote detailing the sources of your information even if a bibliography hasn't been asked for in the competition requirements. NB: Unasked for bibliographies/footnotes are not to be included in the competition's stipulated wordcount.*

Once again, thank you to the three people who entered this competition. You each made an excellent effort and I look forward to receiving more entries from you.

First Place



Jill
Clarke
of Wanganui

Friendship Matters

What if intellectual difference causes barriers that get in the way? Finding a niche in society isn't easy when you're intellectually disabled.

In her advocacy work with People First/Idea Services Louise Rostron was challenged to do something about this gap when a client wanted to become a Christian.

A church in the states ran an adapted Alpha Course for disabled people. With support from Christ Church Anglican ministry the course was improvised to suit. The venture was so successful that more people wanted to help or attend to make this a regular feature.

Tuesday nights at 7pm adults come from residential care, independent and family homes. Transport is provided for those who need it at a small charge. Here they find a spontaneous welcome.

Everyone is accepted regardless of their intellectual or physical differences. There is no criticism. For some it's enough to be there physically as part of a group. Others love to join in and freely volunteer their service. Encouragement may be all they can offer but it's given and received readily. Each week's program is full of fun.

A packet of biscuits brought to the first meeting of each school term helps provide supper. Some of the group do baking for special times.

The Nativity story is especially written each year and a play presented to suit the people taking part. Louise and Dianne Paterson (Training for You tutor) plan the Christmas production. Everyone has a part to play. Besides participation by acting they join in singing, testimonies, scripture, prayers and an offering. Moving chairs, serving supper and doing dishes are part of their service.

Called Bible Friends their mascot, a frog, reminds them they are Fully Relying On God.

A perfect gift of life is friendship and I have received it. **Hubert H Humphry**

Second Place



Jackie
Davey
of Greymouth

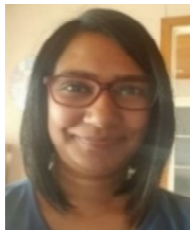
Welfare Demand Doubles

The Salvation Army second hand furniture, clothing and bric-a-brac stores are visible in towns across New Zealand. These stores are part of their fund-raising efforts that enable them to run many other programs that benefit the communities they are a part of. These programs are essential to the health and well-being of many communities including the town of Greymouth on the West Coast of the South Island. A community that has high unemployment and few opportunities for school leavers.

The Salvation Army has the Bridge Contract in Greymouth and provides alcohol and drug addiction treatment programs. Like many other communities the negative impact of methane amphetamines on families' health, welfare and income makes these treatment programs indispensable. In addition to the Bridge Programs they provide budgeting advice, pastoral care and welfare packages. With the contacts and knowledge that the Salvation Army has of Government and other support agencies, they are able to refer anybody asking for help to another agency if they are unable to provide assistance themselves.

Sharon Buchanan, a volunteer with the Salvation Army, runs the food bank that provides the welfare packages. During the Covid-19 lockdown the demand for food packages doubled and the workload to provide these increased as volunteers were required to put into place all the health and safety regulations for the administration and contactless delivery of the food packages. Interviews and assessment processes were done by phone and packages were delivered to homes. "Early in the lockdown people were having difficulty getting through to the Ministry of Social Development for help due to the high demand," she said. "This meant that people were turning to the food bank for assistance." It is likely that a high demand for the Salvation Army services will remain for some time in the future.

Third Place



Ricolene
Gounden
of Auckland

When the World Says Lockdown, Sofi Says Lookup!

I had the pleasure of chatting with the young Sofi Ismail yesterday. At the tender age of 12, she has taken social media by storm through her initiative called ‘look up.’ Sofi, together with her parents, have been serving their local community during the lockdown period.

As soon as she heard the country was going into lockdown, little Sofi started her mission to spread love in a rather unlovely situation. Sofi says the word lockdown sounded “so sad”, so she started calling it the look up period instead. ‘A time to look up and be thankful for all we have.’

She recorded herself reading stories and sent them to all her friends and teachers. She asked her teachers to share them with all the other kids at school because she didn’t want anyone to feel lonely. She popped notes into all the postboxes in her neighbourhood, offering to help fetch groceries and medication for those who could no longer go out themselves. The note read: *‘Hi, I’m Sofi Ismail from around the corner. Please call me if you need anything from the grocery store or pharmacy. My dad isn’t working now, and he can fetch them for you.’* As I read the note, I had to hold back a chuckle or two. Such a sweet little girl, offering out her dad’s services.

Those delegation skills will sure come in handy when she’s a leader one day. She has big dreams of owning many companies that help those in need. When I asked her how many callbacks she received, she said “too many to count. Dad didn’t mind at all, I promise”. Sofi said that she was inspired by her teacher at church who always says that love is a doing word.

Level Two

Judge: Janice Gillgren

Requirement: Review a Christian fiction book written within this decade. Give a brief review of the book (150 words, excluding book details), then rewrite your review into a blurb for that book (100 words) – 250 words in total.

General Comments

I am always delighted when I see someone tell me: 'This is the first time I've tried writing something like this', or similar. I love to see people give things a go. I know how much that willingness to stretch myself helped me to grow as a writer.

Allison Wilson was awarded first place, as 'Deborah – Prophetess of God' fulfilled the requirements most closely. Well done.

Although this is harder to do in a small word count, reduce and vary the length of your paragraphs where practical. There were some small grammatical or punctuation mistakes, but generally the quality of writing was good. Each entrant kept to the word count maximum.

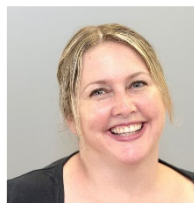
Scrutinise your paragraphs carefully. Do they contain one 'idea', or topic? This can be a difficult concept to grasp, as it can apply to a sentence, a paragraph, an article, or even a whole book! It is really about focus, and is often easier realised when it's not achieved. Passive writing was a common problem I saw, so I have asked the editor if she can include in the next issue a blog article I wrote about passive vs active writing some years ago.

As the review length was necessarily short for the purpose of this assignment (only 150w; which is very short for a review), I didn't require more than a very basic review of the story itself. However, a review is usually more than just an appraisal of the book contents. It also gives details about the book's size, publisher and how to purchase it. It will tell about the author: Is this the first book written? If not, how does it compare with others, if this is known?

A reviewer may include (and commonly does) some personal comments about why the book did or did not appeal to him or her. Writers seek a good review of course, but the reviewer is not obligated to be positive. One reason I wanted such a short review was to ensure each competitor would focus on the appraisal of the story, and I was happy to see this was generally done well, although do beware of extolling the book without actually saying what it was about.

A blurb is primarily a sales tool, but it must be useful. How many people would loan or buy an unknown book without first turning it over and looking at the blurb? The blurb isn't intended to be a list of wonderful but possibly meaningless attributes though. It must primarily answer the readers' question: 'Why do I want (or not want) to read this book?' The storyline must be told just enough to invite further reading. A climax may be hinted at, but no more. The blurb-writer should stay in the background, with relatively few personal comments given.

First Place



Allison
Wilson
of Gisborne

Deborah: Prophetess Of God

By H B Moore

Published by Covenant Communications

Publishing 2019

This biblical fiction breathes life into one of the most fascinating women of the Old Testament — Deborah. We're taken on a journey of a young Israelite shepherdess within whom God had planted a seed of greatness. From these humble beginnings she rose to become a prophetess, a military leader and the only female judge of Israel. She was destined to lead 10,000 soldiers in battle against their Canaanite oppressors.

Part one of the book follows an adolescent Deborah, and her struggles transitioning to womanhood amidst a tyrannical Canaanite reign. Part two is the awakening of the immense calling on her life, and stepping into the pages of history.

The author writes of courage, determination and faith leading to victory against insurmountable odds. This book kicks into action right from the first page, and it's a real page-turner. I enjoyed this book and recommend it to lovers of inspirational figures.

* * *

In a time of Canaanite oppression and cruelty comes a story of faith and courage. Deborah, a young Israelite shepherdess lives a life of isolation in the hills with her family. When great danger befalls her, a series of events unfold that makes her question her true identity.

This is the story of the rising of a great leader of Israel. The woman who becomes a prophetess, a judge and military leader. Guided by her faith against overwhelming odds, she leads an Israelite army commander and 10,000 soldiers into battle against their oppressors. Can they win their fight for freedom?

Second Place



Pauline
Marshall
of Christchurch

The Garden of Madness, by Tracy L. Higley, 2012

This historical novel brings to life the powerful ancient nation of Babylon at the time when King Nebuchadnezzar become deranged as a result of excessive pride in his accomplishments. He is living outdoors like a wild animal, portrayed in the book as being secretly secluded in the luxurious hanging gardens of Babylon.

Written from the point of view of Nebuchadnezzar's daughter, the princess, it is a rich unfolding of the secrecy and sorcery within the sprawling palace. The challenges faced by the Jewish captives, endeavouring to keep true to their restrictive traditions and faith in Yahweh, the one God, are contrasted with the Babylonian idolatry and opulence.

The language is exquisitely descriptive, opening with the confused ramblings of the king's descent into madness. The surprising twists in the plot create great dynamic tension.

A 'ten out of ten' for me, scoring high in language, plot, historical integrity and Christian world-view.

Blurb

This historical novel brings to life the ancient nation of Babylon in the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar. His mind has become deranged because of excessive pride and he is living outdoors like a wild animal.

Written from the perspective of his daughter, the princess, it is a rich unfolding of the sorcery, idolatry and opulence within the palace contrasted with the pure, more restrictive faith of the Jewish captives in the one God.

The author has managed to combine exquisite, expressive language with surprising twists of plot, while keeping true to her re-search of the history. Impossible to put down.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: A Christian is having a conversation with an angry atheist. Write down their interaction in the form of dialogue only. Up to 300 words.

General Comments

Writing dialogue

Well-written dialogue is an important skill for enhancing storytelling. It breaks up long passages of narrative and is a useful tool for developing characters and moving the story along.

Effective dialogue can transform characters into believable people. Their speech can convey personality, ethnicity, social class; as well as emotions such as anger, enthusiasm, sarcasm. Dialogue can also reveal relevant information about the characters – how they feel, the relationship between them and what motivates them to act in a certain way.

The writer can use dialogue to establish the back story and reveal important plot details that the reader may not yet be aware of.

Points to note:

- *Keep dialogue brief and concise. Avoid small talk, greetings, and mundane details which can bore the reader and lose their attention.*
- *If possible, don't use dialogue in dialect as this can make reading difficult and annoying.*

- *Read dialogue aloud to ensure it flows, sounds natural, and suits the speaker.*
- *Avoid dialogue tags (he answered, she argued) so long as it's clear who is speaking. Keep elaborate tags to a minimum. The recommended one is 'said'. Try not to use 'ly' adverbs such as 'he retorted angrily' or 'she replied sarcastically'. Aim to convey the mood some other way. Where possible, show rather than tell.*
- *Dialogue needs to have a purpose. Verbal exchange can help build up tension or conflict between characters and this makes the story interesting.*
- *Punctuation: Indent the dialogue of each speaker and place quotation marks (also known as speech marks or inverted commas) around the words spoken. Use single quotation marks when two sets are needed in a sentence.*

This assignment involved a heated exchange between a Christian and an atheist. The opening statement was important as a starting point for the interaction to get underway. There needed to be strong arguments on both sides to build up the tension. At the end, there was no need for a winner. Each side could beg to differ.

Some of the entrants wasted valuable word count by using dialogue tags which were unnecessary. With only two people, it should have been obvious who was speaking each time. Reading the conversation aloud would have helped in some cases to pick up unnatural or stilted phrases.

I awarded Pat first place because her dialogue fulfilled most of the points I laid out above. The conversation got off to a flying start and set the tone for what followed. She did not use any dialogue tags as it's obvious who is speaking each time. Pat uses short, snappy sentences, and the colloquialisms used by the atheist express his ignorance and irreverent attitude. There's humour as well as tension which makes the conversation interesting.

There's no indication that the Christian has influenced his opponent, but his final statement, "He's alive!" is a powerful one and hopefully rings in the ears of the atheist for some time. An excellent effort Pat! My thanks to the other members for their entries which were also well written.

First Place



Pat
Kerr

of Roxburgh

God's Not Dead

Why do you idiots go to church every Sunday, singing the same dumb songs, and hearing that old codger spout out platitudes?

When was the last time you went to church other than for a funeral or wedding?

Haven't been since I was a kid and was forced to go. Had enough then to last a lifetime.

So you haven't been as an adult?

Nah, too busy for that claptrap...

So you haven't heard a sermon in person?

Nah, turn those TV jerks off too...

What do you know about Jesus?

He's my favourite swear word!

What do you know about Him?

Not much. A baby born in a barn, a guy who swung on a cross...

His mother Mary got herself pregnant without sex! Imagine that! Stretching the truth ain't it?

And the father was God!

Right so far. Did Jesus die?

He died on that cross.

What was his crime?

Dunno, but he died.

Correct. Easter...

Easter...good holiday that. Go rabbit shooting...

Easter is a holiday, a Holy Day, when we remember Jesus' death...

Not me, I prefer the rabbits, chocolate ones too...

Jesus died but He rose again. It's called the Resurrection. Have you heard of this?

Resurrection, reincarnation, all rubbish. Just words...

Resurrection means He came alive again. There were witnesses. His friends, the Roman soldiers...it is historical fact. And it was predicted hundreds of years before by Isaiah, a prophet in the Bible, The Word. When did you last read the Word?

Never...never have and never will.

Never is a long time. You are an adult now. Are you not curious about why Easter is still celebrated by Christians today?

Nah, means nothing...

Well those church-goers celebrate the Living God: Father, Son Jesus, and Holy Spirit.

He's alive today!

Second Place



John
Lindsay
of
Christchurch

When Two World Views Clash

Atheist: Stop quoting your bible to me.

Christian: But it's my 'go to' document and I accept its authority.

Atheist: It's ancient, way out of date. Maybe some nice poetry but the rules and regulations? Too harsh.

Christian: Yes it's thousands of years old but it does answer the big questions.

Atheist: Answers? Huh. Those guys didn't know how much progress we'd make.

Christian: So you think you know where we've come from and why we're here?

Atheist: Of course I don't, but the scientists have it all figured out. No need for a god to explain the unknown.

Christian: And you're not afraid to die?

Atheist: Well, I hope it's not today, but when I go I don't expect to find your big angry god dangling me over the fire.

Christian: But what if the Bible's true? Doesn't that possibility bother you?

Atheist: Nah. What bothers me is the way you Christians treat everyone who doesn't agree with you. You're a bunch of nasty bigots.

Christian: I'm sorry it seems like that. But I trust a good God who created both of us.

Atheist: Oh yes, male and female. There you go again, defining gender and love your way, trying to squeeze people into your suffocating boxes where they don't fit.

Christian: You may not like the message but people in many cultures have accepted it and been released from fear.

Atheist: Another arrogant claim. 'We've redeemed the savages.' No, you've destroyed cultures that've survived happily for thousand of years.

Christian: Not so happily according to stories from Papua New Guinea. They used to fear the spirits and seek revenge but now they live in peace.

Atheist: But you still have no right to force them into your 'one way'.

Christian: Our differences are obvious, but perhaps we can talk another time.

Third Place



Lois Farrow
of Rangiora

How Could God...?

'How could a God of love allow all this suffering?' stormed Jeff. 'I don't believe in God anyway, there couldn't be any such person with the mess this world is in.'

'Interesting,' mused Steve. 'So, if there is no God, where did good and evil come from?'

'Huh, just came I suppose. Everything is random in this world.'

'I'll tell you why I believe in God,' said Steve. 'This amazing world he made is not random, but shows a designer and ...'

'Oh rubbish, we all know that evolution disproves your old creation myth.'

'Don't be so sure,' said Steve. 'How about the existence of good in the world, and the existence of evil ...'

'Now, that's exactly why God doesn't exist. If God exists, why is there so much evil everywhere?'

'Don't shout. Evil was brought in by Satan, the Devil, and we each choose who we follow.'

'I don't follow either of them, I'm my own man. Believing in God is no different to believing in the tooth fairy.'

'It's very different. The tooth fairy can't forgive you, or give you peace. My next point is what I see of God's work in people, he transforms them from despair to hope and joy, he takes away guilt.'

'You're wasting your time, there are plenty of good people who don't believe in God. You can have hope and joy and lots more fun without God.'

'I have fun with God. He forgives me, cares for me, and takes away my fear. He is so amazing, incredible, beautiful and loving.'

'You're not going to convince me,' said Jeff.

'How could God not exist?' said Steve. 'He shows his presence in this world in a thousand ways every day. He made us, and wants to care for us always.'

Competitions for October 2020

Due by September 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: Write an essay highlighting four to five key points that validate the authenticity of the Bible. Give your essay a strong title, a good introduction, three to four paragraphs elaborating on your introduction and a strong conclusion tying all the key points together. 500 words.



Debbie

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write a letter of sympathy appropriate for a friend or family member who is dealing with grief and in need of hope. 200 words.



Janice

Email entry to Janice Gillgren at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Choose a parable Jesus told, as recorded in the New Testament, and rewrite it in a modern, contemporary version while retaining its meaning and significance. 250 words.



Julia

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org



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.