

DECEMBER - JANUARY 2021

# THE CHRISTIAN Writer

## SEE INSIDE FOR

Writing Competition Awards

Photography Competition

Poetry

Book Reviews:

Waiting  
Shepherd's Warning,  
Shepherd's Delight

Crossword

Ten Commandments for  
Working with Your Agent

Writing Retreats 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](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org)

**Editor:** Kathryn Paul: [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)

**Treasurer and Membership Secretary:** Debbie Smith

For subscriptions, donations, address changes: [treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org)

### **Join Us! Annual Subscriptions—2 options:**

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

Join us through our website: [www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/)

Credit/Debit card payment is available online or pay by bank deposit, phone or Internet banking to: NZ Christian Writers, a/c 12 3040 0547346 00, Reference: [Your name]

### **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](mailto:reviews@nzchristianwriters.org)

**The Christian Writer** is our bimonthly magazine published by NZ Christian Writers and distributed to all members. Contributions from members 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 be no more than 500 words long, except at the discretion of the editor.

The editor reserves the right to condense and/or edit any contributions for reason of space. Ideas and opinions will not be edited but editing of a technical nature may occur to maintain a high standard of writing. Views and opinions expressed do not necessarily state or reflect those of the editor.

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# The Christian Writer

Dec 2020 – Jan 2021

ISSN 2537-8708 (Online)

VOL 37. No 6

ISSN 1171-0098 (Print)

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## 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. We encourage all members to reach out to other Christian writers. Feel free to share our website link with them so they can join us. As a member you are the best advocate for growing our collective of NZ Christian Writers.

**[www.nzchristianwriters.org](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org)**

# President's Report



Congratulations to all winners of the three levels and especially those now qualifying for promotion to their next level in our writing competitions. Throughout 2020 these competitions have been

popular with several new members entering them on a regular basis. Our competitions are designed to encourage you and help equip and develop your writing skillset. Plus they are a wonderful way to win cash prizes awarded to those who finish in First, Second or Third Places. As published with our OCT-NOV 2020 magazine, you are welcome to also download a PDF copy of our Competition Topics & Criteria for 2021 here: [www.nzchristianwriters.org/competitions/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/competitions/)

A reminder of our Photography Competition for *The Christian Writer* covers. To date we have received 10 entries from which to choose the photographs for our six 2021 magazine covers. Our competition deadline is January 10th, 2021. Ensure you submit your entries before the deadline so your photographs can be considered for our magazine's 2021 front cover designs. Email your best entries to: [president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org)

As Christmas is just around the corner, have you considered giving yourself the gift of being at our Retreat 2021? Cottage availability is sold out. However, we do have space available in shared house accommodation at Flaxmill Retreat Centre, Whitianga. Retreat 2021 is from April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 2nd 2021. With our accommodation being at just over 50% of capacity, we would welcome filling our final 20 available spaces with members who are looking for inspiration, insights and connections as they pursue their publishing journey. Even if you are a casual writer or considering stepping into publishing for the first time, you are very welcome to join us. We encourage beginner and experienced writers to attend our Retreat 2021.

Seminar sessions include: 'Social Media for Authors' and 'Public Speaking for Writers' (Staci McLean); 'Publishing & Publicity' and 'The Writer's Life' (Karen McMillan); 'Writing from the Secret Room' and 'Bringing Your Words to Life: The Art of Three-Dimensional Storytelling' (Eugene Moreau); 'How To Build a Powerful Publishing Team' and 'Being Motivated for More' (Phil Strong).

To register your interest, visit our online form: [www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2021/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2021/)

All the best for an enjoyable Christmas and New Year season. I trust you find some time to rest, reflect, and write. ☺

Blessings  
Justin St Vincent



BOOK  
TODAY!

NZ CHRISTIAN  
**writers**

# RETREAT

APRIL 29TH - MAY 2ND 2021

FLAXMILL RETREAT CENTRE · WHITIANGA



**STACI  
MCLEAN**



**KAREN  
MCMILLAN**



**EUGENE  
MOREAU**



**PHIL  
STRONG**

BOOK TODAY AT  
[www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2021](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2021)

# Editorial: The Blessing

by Kathryn Paul



In a previous editorial, I mentioned I've noticed over the years that when I support other Christians and their Christian activities, whether it's purchasing their books, music, movies, art or whatever, God always seems to repay and bless me for it. My personal good news is, He's done it again! Thank You, Lord!

I've been enjoying voluntarily serving other Christian writers as magazine editor and by producing our catalogues. I'm passionate about my role. I get a buzz from seeing other Christian writers receive support to succeed. I believe the Lord is rewarding my sowing encouragement into the lives of other Christian writers and putting in my time voluntarily for NZCW. I'd like to share how the Lord has rewarded me.

Due to it being out of print for the past eight years, I haven't been able to advertise my published book, *Dog Tucker*, in our NZCW catalogue. (*Dog Tucker* is a children's novel published by Scholastic NZ in 2009). However, this year a teacher (God bless her) made an enquiry about purchasing a class set of *Dog Tucker* and this has resulted in Scholastic NZ deciding to do a reprint of the book in March 2021! I do believe it was God who opened the door to have my children's novel published in the first place and He's blessed me again by opening this opportunity for a reprint. I'm quite amazed, really grateful to the Lord and excited.

I want to encourage everyone to take the time to look at our amazing catalogue, which has grown even bigger than last year's, and consider who you might be able to bless by purchasing their work. It can become a double blessing if you purchase from a Christian writer to support them and gift their work to someone who will benefit from receiving it. Sharing the catalogue or a specific category with those who could be interested in it is another way to be a blessing and it doesn't cost anything except a bit of your time. I believe God will bless you for your sincere and selfless effort. Our catalogue can be accessed via the NZCW website.

I pray your summer will be Christ-filled and you'll be able to get out and about, enjoying the beauty of our country. I pray a blessing on your writing projects and look forward to seeing what you produce for the Lord in 2021.

Love in Jesus, Kathryn Paul

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

*'...We are all born to help  
each other. No matter  
how difficult it is. Life is  
good when you are  
happy; but much better  
when others are happy  
because of you.'*  
Pope Francis.

# Seminar with Justin St Vincent



During November our NZ Christian Writers president, Justin St Vincent, presented a seminar for writers.

There were 18 plus writers in attendance, half from Northgate Baptist Church, and half from NZ Christian Writers.

Seminar sessions presented were: 'How To Write A Book' and 'How To Market A Book'.

Here is some of the feedback received from seminar attendees:

*'Very informative, thank you. Good to hear from a personal perspective. Great hints and tips. Valuable.'*

*'Very well presented and informative. Highly recommended.'*

*'Clear information. Good slides that covered content well.'*

*'Very informative. Great to have Q&A times. I learned some very helpful things.'*

*'Always very professional and polished with fun interaction and lots of practical experience.'*

*'Beautifully presented content.'*

*'Informative and passionate.'*

*'Great overview. Good ideas.'*

Disappointed you missed out on attending? The good news is we have dropbox links to PDFs of the seminar presentation slides for anyone who would like them:

## Seminar 1: 'How To Write A Book'

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/x5ycv1am5eq0h8p/NZCW\\_Seminar\\_01\\_How\\_To\\_Write\\_A\\_Book.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/x5ycv1am5eq0h8p/NZCW_Seminar_01_How_To_Write_A_Book.pdf?dl=0)

## Seminar 2: 'How To Market A Book'

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/73rk40kuij3gy2h/NZCW\\_Seminar\\_02\\_How\\_To\\_Market\\_A\\_Book.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/73rk40kuij3gy2h/NZCW_Seminar_02_How_To_Market_A_Book.pdf?dl=0)

Well done, Justin, we look forward to the next one and connecting with you at the NZCW Writers Retreat in 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/](http://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 list of exciting guest speakers.

## Sister Eveleen Retreat House

## Contemplative Writing Retreats in the South Island

A weekend dedicated to contemplative prayer and writing. Facilitated by Eddie O'Connor, Director, SERH. For more information, dates and registrations go to: [www.sistereretreat.com](http://www.sistereretreat.com)

## 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 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.

## Photography Competition for *The Christian Writer* Cover

***We want to feature your photography on our six covers of the 2021 magazines!***

All photographs must be 300 dpi (Dots Per Inch).

Photographs should contain images that inspire people to write. You may enter as many photographs as you like. There will be six winning photos and each will be featured on one magazine cover during 2021.



Email your photo entries to Justin at  
[president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org).

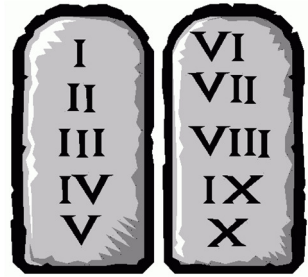
**Deadline 10th January 2021.**



# Ten Commandments for Working with Your Agent

by Steve Laube

By request, here are my ten commandments for working with your agent. Break them at your own peril. Thou shalt vent only to thine agent and never directly to thy publisher or editor.



1. Thou shalt not get whipped into a frenzy by the industry rumour mill fomented by the Internet. Asketh thy agent if what you've heard is true.
2. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's success. Be content with thine own contract.
3. If thou hast a dispute with thine agent, thou shalt talk to thy agent and seeketh resolution. Jumping ship without reason is unprofessional ... and agents talketh to each other.
4. Thou shalt consider thy deadlines as sacrosanct. Thy hand signeth the contract, therefore thou art obligated. Thou shalt not expect thy agent to miraculously create extra time at the last minute.
5. Respecteth the boundaries of the communication relationship with thy agent. Do not risketh being classified as a spammer or high maintenance by thy agent.
6. Thou shalt be reasonable and balanced with regard to all social media. Remember, every word written on social media is a word not written on thy manuscript. At least don't telleth the world that thou art eating ice cream to avoideth writing thy manuscript. Thy editor shall readeth your confession and weepeth.
7. Keepeth it all in perspective. Selling only 8,000 books still meaneth 8,000 people have 'bought a ticket' to read thy work. That crowd would filleth a megachurch auditorium.
8. Remember thy calling to be a writer and keep it holy. You are in the business of changing the world word by word. Everything else is secondary.
9. Thou shalt rise and call thy agent blessed (and send chocolates at Christmas and cash on birthdays).
10. If thou dost not have an agent, do not passeth 'Go.' Instead, grabbeth one and bringeth said agent into thy camp ASAP. This industry is a labyrinth; and thou shalt someday discover thou needest one, and then it shall be too late. Real life examples available upon request.

© 2020 Steve Laube of The Steve Laube Agency ([www.stevelaube.com](http://www.stevelaube.com))

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# 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](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org).***

## ANNA'S EDITING

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

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/](https://facebook.com/Annas.Editing.Co/) to learn more and to read author reviews.

**Anna Cullen:** 021 717903.

E: [annas.editing.int@gmail.com](mailto:annas.editing.int@gmail.com)

## ASTUTE EDITING

**Candice Hume**

E: [info@astuteediting.co.nz](mailto: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:** 027 440 5851

E: [gpetersen@hotmail.co.nz](mailto:gpetersen@hotmail.co.nz)

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Good references. I do not publish but I can point you towards help. For a quotation, contact:

**Lissa Weight:** 021 0851 6944

E: [lydiaweight@gmail.com](mailto: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**

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## DAYSTAR BOOKS

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- Tips on writing.
- Ideas for publicising your book.

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E: [Info@daystarbooks.org](mailto:Info@daystarbooks.org) Check our website [www.daystarbooks.org](http://www.daystarbooks.org)

## WILDSIDE PUBLISHING

### Demystifying the self-publishing process

Writing a book is hard enough without all the annoying and persistent questions about the next stages of the process (and the costs) buzzing your brain! We get it! Wild Side Publishing can help. Here's all you need to understand the process and costs:

- Submitting your manuscript.
- Proofreading and editing.
- Cover design and text layout.
- Printing quotes for NZ stock.
- Worldwide listing for print-on-demand paperback and eBook.
- Distribution to NZ stores and libraries.
- MailChimp and Facebook targeted marketing.

Visit [www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published/#publish\\_or\\_print](http://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](mailto:WritingAnswers1@gmail.com)  
or [Janette.Busch@gmail.com](mailto:Janette.Busch@gmail.com)

# Onward Christian Writers

by Julie Belding

Thank you to Frederick Swallow, who brought this traditional NZ Christian Writers song to our attention. To be sung to the tune of *Onward Christian Soldiers*.

Onward Christian writers  
Working for the Lord,  
Serving Jesus gladly  
Oft without reward!  
We are willing wordsmiths  
At our Lord's behest  
Writing for the Master  
Giving Him our best.

## CHORUS

Onward Christian Writers  
Work in one accord  
Each communication  
Done as to the Lord.

Onward through the dry times,  
Known to every soul;  
Let's keep persevering  
Till we've reached our goal.  
Never bowed by failure  
All undaunted we  
Never cease our efforts  
To write with quality!

## CHORUS

Onward Christian Writers  
Choose our words with care  
Each communication  
Simple, bright and clear!

In the Master's service,  
Working countless days,  
Looking for the right word,  
Honing every phrase.  
Seeking inspiration  
Polishing our prose  
Writing and revising  
Till our writing glows.

## CHORUS

Onward Christian Writers  
Work in one accord  
Each communication  
Done as to the Lord.



## WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian Writing of  
today and yesteryear –

Series by Frederick Swallow



### Marsden Memorial

#### On Christmas Day 1814

Maori folk and settlers heard Samuel Marsden preach the first time in New Zealand from Psalm 100 and Luke 2:1-16.

#### On Christmas Day 2014

Third generation Samuel Marsden gave a thanksgiving message at Oihi Bay. Several hundred sang carols. Samuel Marsden prayed that the glorious gospel would never depart from its inhabitants until time shall be no more.



Marsden Memorial Oihi Bay

NZ Post Series of six Christmas stamps.

## Wicked Change?

by Beth Walker

English changes, this we know.  
That word 'wicked' long ago  
Meant someone or something bad,  
Then became 'cool,' 'choice,' or 'rad.'

Long ago in days of old  
'Cool' meant something less than  
cold.

'Choice' was something to decide.  
'Radical' – has that word died?

All these meant another thing –  
Should my heart be down or sing?  
Can't we keep the status quo?  
Can I let old meanings go?

## Our Lord

by Patrick McLuskie

Our Lord is beautiful;  
as we kneel at the door  
of His dwelling place  
and ask  
that we may enter;  
but He has already  
opened the door,  
and stands before us  
His arms open in welcome  
as He calls us come  
before we thought to ask,  
And His smile  
tells our hearts  
of His love,  
and His embrace  
tells our souls  
of our salvation.  
And we enter  
that we may know, in truth;  
How beautiful  
Is the face  
of Our Lord.



### Waiting

By Barbara Harry

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Wild Side Publishing 2020

This attractive devotional book is the first of a series the author intends to write. It's a reflective coffee table book containing scripture, poems, stunning photographs and artwork.

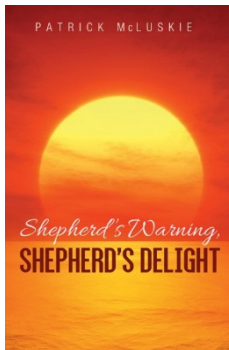
Barbara loves to explore the Creator's world and her writings come from a journey of reflection and prayer.

In writing 'Waiting – transformation of the soul', she invites the reader to join her in discovering the True Source of waiting in stillness and rest.

Using the life cycle of the monarch butterfly in this contemplative parable, she likens its metamorphosis to our process of waiting for a dream or promise to eventuate in life's journey.

Just as the physical process in the cycle must not be rushed or the butterfly may die if assisted to hatch before its appointed time, so we must be patient and allow God to transform us in his time and manner.

This lovely book is the perfect gift to share and display on a coffee table for all to enjoy, and I look forward to further books in the series.



### Shepherd's Warning, Shepherd's Delight

By Patrick McLuskie

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Resource Publications USA 2020

Patrick McLuskie is an ex-military airline pilot who lives in Christchurch.

Educated at a Catholic school, Patrick grew up with a secular view of life. Later he became interested in searching for a higher being and the meaning of life. This initially led him to explore Eastern religions and mysticism.

But in his search for real answers, he re-examined Christianity and to his surprise, discovered the Bible to be logical, historical and believable.

Patrick's anthology of poems chronicles his turbulent spiritual journey over many years from darkness and confusion to his discovery of the source of truth and light – Jesus Christ.

His poetry reveals deep contemplation, a sensitive perception of spirituality, and his intimate relationship with his Heavenly Father.

While this anthology may not have wide appeal, I found many of his poems challenging and satisfying, and I commend him for his openness and vulnerability in revealing his journey to discover the truth.

Enjoy a sample of Patrick's work on the previous page.

## Level 4

By Neil Summers

*'Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls...'*

*Jer 6:16 KJV.*

Tell me Shepherd, what ails your land,  
For the ways are silent and the people stilled.

Once ceaseless mammoth engines idle stand,

Guarding now-abandoned works and fields untilled.

No billowed sail skims the empty sea, its winding strand

Not marred by aimless feet or the moated castles children build.

And friends and lovers, no longer lip to lip or hand in hand,

Await love's touch and free embrace for now left unfulfilled.

Watchman, do not wonder, and seeing do not fear,

For such as this was long foretold by the prophets and the seers.

So fallow follows plenty, and times of dearth appear,

Not to wound, but search the hearts, as long endure the years.

For emptiness and weariness reward all who adhere,

To the merciless devices which assail their eyes and ears.

While quietness and stillness, the sum of all their fears,

Are disparaged in pursuit of what will shortly disappear.

But see! What greater good than that they sought

This testing time has wrought.

For the childcare grounds are empty of those of tender years,

So fathers nurture children and mothers soothe their tears.

And abandoned by the engine's din, the silent city street,

Surrenders to the cycle's wheel, and the lilt of strolling feet.

What then if commerce abdicate its all-pervasive reign,

If the people ask the old paths, and walk in them again.

*May 2020.*

*To connect with Neil and read more, visit:*

[seekingacountry2020.blogspot.com](https://seekingacountry2020.blogspot.com)



*(Photo by Craig Hellier)*

# Join a Writers Group

## **AUCKLAND, ELLERSLIE**

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[sara.mcguire81@gmail.com](mailto:sara.mcguire81@gmail.com)

## **CHRISTCHURCH**

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## **WELLINGTON**

Paul Devereux  
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[paulrdevereux@xtra.co.nz](mailto:paulrdevereux@xtra.co.nz)

Our local group leaders are available to help connect you to a community of writers in your area. Contact these leaders to find out more about meeting dates, times and locations.

[www.nzchristianwriters.org/groups/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/groups/)

# WELCOME New Members and Renewals:

**Gillian Brebner**  
Bay of Plenty

**Ingrid Coles**  
Hawkes Bay

**Tikvah Drinkwater**  
Northland

**Pam Driver**  
Auckland South

**Christina Ferens**  
Auckland North

**Frances Hall**  
Auckland North

**Dee Holmes**  
Hamilton

**Andrew Kebbell**  
Wellington

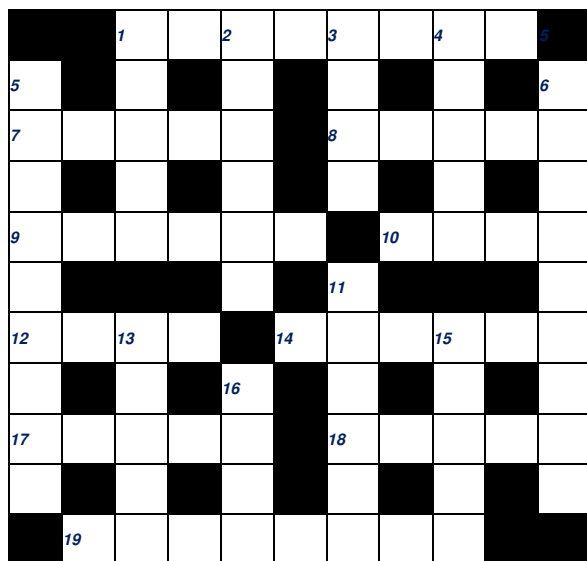
**Dr Mary Redmayne**  
Wellington

**Lynn Robertson**  
Te Puke

**All NZCW members are  
invited to share a Writer  
Profile and Book Feature(s)  
on our website. For details  
email NZCW president, Justin  
St Vincent:**

[president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org)





## Crossword by Eion Field

### Clues Across:

1. Efforts to spread the gospel
7. Reduced slightly
8. To reawaken or inspire
9. Jesus: Lord and .....
10. Said of Solomon
12. Roman Emperor who persecuted Christians
14. The end of the day
17. At no time
18. Timing in music
19. Church denomination

### Clues Down:

1. Old Testament law giver
  2. Abrupt
  3. An object
  4. Popular girl's name from the Bible
  5. Lasting indefinitely
  6. A welcoming
  11. Characteristic of country life, quaint
  13. Bird, well known to Elijah
  15. Disciple, also called Peter
  16. By word of mouth
- (Solution page 19)

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# Alternatives to Using the Word 'Said'



## 476 Ways to Avoid Saying "Said"



Created by [PROOFREADINGSERVICES.COM](https://proofreading-services.com)  
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Great writers and editors agree that "said" is the most effective and least obtrusive dialogue tag. While these alternatives can add impact to a scene, use them sparingly when characters are...

### ...in general conversation.

added  
answered  
began  
chimed in

chipped in  
commented  
contributed  
greeted

interjected  
interposed  
interrupted  
introduced

mentioned  
read  
rejoined  
remarked

replied  
responded  
started  
stated

weighed in

### ...talking at length.

babbled  
blabbered  
blathered  
chattered  
concluded  
continued

digressed  
ended  
enumerated  
finished  
gabbled  
harped

intoned  
lectured  
listed  
narrated  
nattered  
persisted

prated  
prattled  
preached  
rambled  
ranted  
rapped

rattled off  
rattled on  
recited  
reiterated  
repeated  
restated

resumed  
trailed off  
waffled  
went on  
yapped

### ...using a unique tone.

alliterated  
caroled  
chanted  
chirped  
chittered  
chorused  
clucked  
cooed

coughed  
cracked  
croaked  
crooned  
deadpanned  
drawled  
dribbled  
droned

echoed  
enuniated  
gagged  
gasped  
gawped  
gibbered  
grunted  
gurgled

hummed  
lilted  
lisped  
mewled  
neighed  
panted  
purred  
quavered

quoted  
rasped  
rhymed  
sang  
sibilated  
sighed  
simpered  
slurred

spluttered  
sputtered  
trilled  
tutted  
warbled  
wheezed  
whickered  
whinnied

### ...speaking loudly.

bellowed  
boomed  
brayed  
burst out  
called

clamored  
cried out  
exclaimed  
hollered  
howled

resounded  
roared  
screamed  
screeched  
shouted

shrieked  
shrilled  
squealed  
thundered  
trumpeted

vociferated  
yammered  
yawped  
yelled  
yelped

yowled

### ...speaking quietly.

breathed  
mouthed

mumbled

murmured

muttered

squeaked

whispered

# Alternatives to Using the Word ‘Said’

## Continued...

### ...suggesting or considering something.

alleged  
alluded  
assumed  
averred  
avouched  
calculated  
considered  
debated  
decided  
deducted  
deflected

determined  
equivocated  
estimated  
fibbed  
foretold  
guaranteed  
guessed  
haggled  
hedged  
hinted  
hypothesized

implied  
inferred  
insinuated  
interpreted  
intimated  
judged  
lied  
motioned  
mused  
pledged  
pondered

postulated  
predicted  
premised  
presupposed  
prevaricated  
proffered  
promised  
proposed  
put forth  
put in  
puzzled

reasoned  
recalled  
reckoned  
reconciled  
recorded  
remembered  
speculated  
stipulated  
suggested  
supposed  
surmised

theorized  
thought  
vacillated  
ventured  
volunteered  
vowed  
wondered

### ...sad or nervous.

agonized  
apologized  
bawled  
bleated  
blubbered

choked  
comforted  
consoled  
cried  
cringed

faltered  
fretted  
fussed  
grieved  
keened

lamented  
mourned  
puled  
sniffled  
sobbed

stammered  
stuttered  
sympathized  
wailed

wept  
whimpered  
worried

### ...happy or excited.

bantered  
boasted  
bragged  
bubbled  
cackled  
cheered

chortled  
chuckled  
complimented  
congratulated  
crowed  
effused

exaggerated  
extolled  
exulted  
giggled  
guffawed  
gushed

hooted  
jabbered  
jested  
joked  
joshed  
laughed

marveled  
praised  
quipped  
rejoiced  
snorted  
swooned

thanked  
whooped

### ...trying to make someone do something.

advised  
beckoned  
cajoled  
cautioned  
coached  
coaxed

commanded  
convinced  
counseled  
dared  
decreed  
demanded

dictated  
directed  
encouraged  
enjoined  
exhorted  
goaded

instructed  
invited  
ordered  
persuaded  
pressed  
prodded

reassured  
recommended  
reminded  
tempted  
touted  
urged

warned  
wheedled  
wooded

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### Crossword Solution for page 17

**ACROSS:** 1. missions 7. eased 8. evoke 9. Master 10. wise 12. Nero 14. sunset 17. never 18. tempo  
19. Anglican

**DOWN:** 1. Moses 2. sudden 3. item 4. Naomi 5. permanent 6. reception 11. rustic 13. raven  
15. Simon 16. oral

# Writing Competitions Points Board Winners

Congratulations to our final prize winners for 2020! Prizes being awarded as per the points board below are: **\$60 for First Place**, **\$50 for Second Place** **\$40 for Third place**.

In each magazine, 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.

All prize-winners in Level One are now promoted to Level Two. Our First-Place tie-prize-winners in Level Two are now promoted to Level Three. Well done also to John Lindsay who won the year-long Level Three competition and is now promoted to the Honours List!

For all levels the competitions now begin again and everyone starts at zero. Ensure this December you finish the year with an entry into our February-March issue's competition. The deadline is January 1st. Hopefully you will kick off the new year with some points on the new points board!

Prize-Winners during 2021 will be published in the Jun-Jul 2021 and Dec 2021-Jan 2022 magazine editions. Check out the competitions on the final page of the magazine or visit our website to see all the competition topics for 2021.

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Jill Clarke	27	Caroline Cook	27	John Lindsay	69
Jackie Davey	21	Jean Crane	27	Jean Shewan	51
Ricolene Gouden	18	Pauline Marshall	24	Pat Kerr	48
Sheryl Paul	15	Allison Wilson	15	Lois Farrow	24
Christine Platt	15	Felicity Logan	9	Keith Willis	24
Taryn Dryfhout	12			Sue Thatcher	9
Corrine Sinclair	9				

**Well done to everyone** who entered this year, whether you earned points or not.



# Competition Results

## Level One

**Judge: Debbie McDermott**

**Requirement:** Take a real-life incident that happened to you one Christmas Day and re-tell it as a fictional short story with fictional characters. 400 words.

### General Comments

*I was pleased to receive eight entries into this competition and congratulate those who gave it a go. You all made a good effort and I thoroughly enjoyed reading your stories.*

*The key requirement of this competition was to convert a personal incident into a fictional story with fictional characters. This meant entrants needed to present themselves as one of the 'fictional' characters in their story so it appeared they were writing about someone else rather than about themselves. It was therefore necessary for them to write their story entirely in the third-person or 'fly on the wall' point of view. Only five of the entrants did this. The remaining three wrote in the first-person.*

*It should be noted that the prime objective of this assignment was to teach or further develop skills in creating a fictional character or characters based on the writer's own experience and powers of observation. This is a method predominantly used by creative writers to develop credible characters and is a worthwhile exercise to engage in—particularly for the aspiring novelist.*

*My selection of the three winners of this competition (Sheryl Paul, Jill Clarke and Ricolene Gounden) was based on the quality of their stories, their high standard of writing and the correct third-person point of view in which their stories were written. Sadly, Jackie Davey's well-written and touching story missed out on being awarded a place because it was written in the first-person. Hopefully, she will seek to publish it.*

*At least two of the other four entrants would have been considered for a winning place in the competition had they not made so many punctuation errors, such as leaving out apostrophes to mark the omission of one or more letters (e.g. writing its for 'it is' instead of it's) and separating sentences with commas instead of full stops or semicolons (e.g. A ripple of excitement flows through his veins, he feels his heart beating faster, he has not felt like this for a long time). The remaining two entries also lost marks due to several grammar, tense and spelling mistakes.*

*I am always saddened when a good story misses out on being awarded a place due to unnecessary errors and once again urge entrants to take the time to check and edit their entries before submitting them. Microsoft Word has a built-in grammar and spelling checker for this purpose. Educational resources and websites are also great tools for learning how to write correctly, as are my critiques. Please read and apply them.*

# First Place



Sheryl  
Paul  
of Dunedin

## The Christmas Trifle

---

Twenty-year-old Olivia bounced into the kitchen one December morning. "Mum, have you done our Christmas menu yet?" she demanded.

"Uh, no," her mother answered, opening the door for the cat. "Christmas is a while away yet, isn't it?"

"It's only two weeks away!" cried Olivia. "We need to plan the menu. And I really want you to make trifle. Your trifles are the best!"

Shelley groaned inwardly as she poured warm milk into the cat's dish. The culinary arts had never been her thing.

"Actually," Olivia went on, "you need to make two trifles."

Shelley's head jerked upwards in dismay. "Two?"

"Yes!" Olivia replied enthusiastically. "One with custard and one without! I don't like custard."

"Since when haven't you liked custard?"

"Mum, you *know* I've never liked custard," Olivia told her mother sternly.

Shelley sighed. "Tell you what, Livvy. I'll make *one* trifle, with custard on one half of it only. The whole top will be covered with cream."

Olivia looked anxious. "But how will I know which side doesn't have the custard?" she asked.

"I'll decorate each side differently - strawberries and sliced peaches."

"Okay," agreed Olivia reluctantly.

Christmas morning was a flurry of laughing and present opening. At noon, Olivia went into the kitchen to help prepare the table for the Christmas feast.

Shelley laid out the main course. Olivia went to the fridge to extract the delicious-looking desserts. Chattering away, she lifted the promised half-custard-less trifle off the shelf.

She never knew quite how it happened, but suddenly the precious pudding slipped out of her hands. With a loud gasp, Olivia clutched at the falling bowl, with the result that the custard side of the trifle remained in it at least. The rest was a be-creamed splodge on the floor.

Olivia's already large blue eyes expanded noticeably as she looked up at her mother in shock; her mouth the proverbial 'O'.

Shelley stood there, momentarily stunned. What was the point of saying anything, after all? It was a trifling disaster, really.

Then she regained her usual calm demeanour. "Well, at least we still have some of it," she told Olivia cheerfully. "But you'll just have to eat it with custard like everyone else."

"Yes," Olivia nodded, ever so meekly.

Olivia's custard catastrophe became a family joke. But it was years before she dared mention that a custard-free trifle might be nice for Christmas.

## Second Place



Jill  
Clarke  
of Wanganui

### Happenings at No. 5

---

The old house smiled. No-one would notice its rusty roof and flaking paint today. It held the wobbly step firm as Mr Fixit and his eldest son carried apple boxes and planks inside. It stretched the walls in the front room as the boxes were placed around two extended tables and the planks rested on them to make extra seating as chairs and stools were limited. White sheets covered the tables that had been placed together. There were flowers and decorations amongst glasses and jugs of cordial or water.

Grandma sorted through a box of plates from the auction. No-one would notice chips on the underside. Fidget and Gidget polished bent, buckled cutlery. It looked fine once it was shined up.

The house breathed in the smell of the Christmas puddings that had hung in the shed as they were carried in to join the fresh garden vegetables roasting with the lamb. A funeral service was held for the family's pet lamb Lilly White to celebrate the good times they'd had together. The children were unaware that her demise was from the butcher's knife.

"Don't lean on the table. keep your elbows in and sit still or the planks might move and the seats collapse. We have to fit everyone in."

Everyone included an assortment of grandmothers, uncles, aunts, and other family with their spouses and children.

"Someone can say 'Grace' and we'll 'dish up'." Mrs. Fixit said to anyone who might be listening.

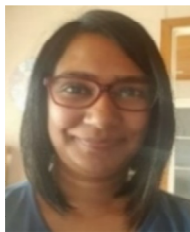
“Me, Me, Me” responded little Dot: “None of the kids, thank You for our dinner. Amen.”

Homemade gravy covered vegetables and meat. This was followed by custard covered Plum Duff containing threepences and sixpences. Uncle Oscar managed to slip a half crown into his helping, telling everyone that his sixpence had grown. Somehow another appeared in little Dot’s piece of pudding.

Uncle Oscar pushed back his chair and bent under the table. He removed a tape recorder and placed it on the table. Rewinding the tape, he played back the recording. What a rowdy, happy lot they were. The sound of voices and laughter along with the scraping of cutlery on plates was deafening! Requests for salt and pepper or another helping voiced loudly.

Mr. Fixit gave thanks to the Lord for His provision. Thirty-four people including me, had Christmas together in the old house that stretched and smiled at No. 5.

## Third Place



Ricolene  
Gouden  
of Auckland

## Room for one more

After a long and stressful year, Christmas was finally here. For Rose, there were equal parts of excitement and anxiety in the air. Excitement over quality family time and anxiety over endless gift wrapping and food prep. Terry, her little sister, was surprisingly helpful this year. She was at Rose’s beck and call, lending a hand with anything that would lighten her sister’s load. Rose, Terry, and their dad Ian were going to Christmas lunch at their cousin’s house. They expected twenty family members to attend. Rose was your typical type A personality, very OCD and routine driven. Things were going smoothly until dad’s phone rang. It was his friend Dave and he had no one to spend Christmas with. Cue racing thoughts and sweaty palms for Rose. She called her cousin to gauge how things were going on her end of the world. “Oh no!”, she exclaimed. There were an extra seven people at her place, three hours ahead of lunch! Rose gave a heart-warming smile and said to dad, “Christmas for four at our place this year!”

The girls hadn’t met Dave before and weren’t sure what to expect. They felt like this was the right thing to do but still felt nervous about having him over. “What would we talk about, what fun are we going to miss out on with the family?” Rose sighed as all these thoughts flooded her mind. In came Dave, with a heartwarming smile and a bouquet of flowers. Rose felt like all her stress and anxiety had melted

away. It was one of the most special Christmas days they had ever experienced! Dave was much older than their dad and it felt like they had their grandad over. Their own grandad had passed on many years ago which made Dave's presence even more special. He shared stories from his childhood and asked about their lives. He indulged their Christmas traditions, and after a week of hustle and bustle, was such a breath of fresh air. What seemed like her perfect Christmas gone wrong, ended up being one of the most memorable Christmas's ever. She made room for one more. Ever since, she always looked to be more inclusive, especially at Christmas time. She saw it as her birthday gift to Christ, even though she felt like the one who had been blessed.

## Level Two

### Judge: Janice Gillgren

**Requirement:** 'A sparrow and an eagle chat one day.' Write a humorous story based on a conversation between these two birds to contrast and illustrate the widely different perspectives people may have on life. Compose your own title and write mostly dialogue. 250 – 300 words.

### General Comments

*What wonderful stories! I was sad to have to disqualify the funniest one because it was far too long. However, the remaining three all did very well too and I found it difficult to decide on placings.*

*Caroline Cook won first place; and Pauline Marshall and Jean Crane gained second equal.*

*The usual requirements of word length, format, title, grammar and punctuation were generally well met. There were some instances of sentences that would be better divided either by a semicolon, or a full stop. Although there is more flexibility in rules for writing dialogue because people seldom speak 'proper' English, writing as you speak doesn't quite work either. Punctuation is necessary to keep sentences clear and easily understood.*

*The most common problem I saw with most of the stories is that the two birds' speech had a very similar language level.*

*Writing a short story, with mostly dialogue, requires clear characterisation. Here are some tools that help you achieve this.*

*Sentence length and composition. These have a surprising impact on characterisation, which is very important in a short story with a lot of dialogue. For example, the eagle's language can be more 'upper class' and the sparrow's more simple; or the other way around if you want to surprise your reader.*

*'Show, don't tell.' Show your characters, and thus their perspectives, by contrasting little details about them. The way a character speaks is just as important as the content. Think clearly about what sort of character you want each bird to have and have them talk accordingly. They shouldn't talk the same way.*



*Show contrasts in how characters react or respond to events and dialogue. Reactions to unexpected rides in an eagle's wing, for example, can show not just a physical perspective of height above ground level, but how little sparrow thinks about his place in society.*

*Names can also imply superiority or inferiority, upper class or lower, and so on. All the entries (other than the disqualified one) used only Eagle and Sparrow, (or the eagle and the sparrow) and more imagination could have been used here. Remember that names, when used as proper nouns, should be capitalised.*

*Highlighting words in bold (or capitals, or underlined) is generally considered very amateur by editors, so it's a habit best avoided. Some italics are permitted, if not overdone, and mostly to highlight quotes or important information.*

*Speech marks can be single or double these days, as long as they are used consistently, whichever you choose. These were done well in the stories and I just point it out because not everyone used the same marks.*

*If your article or story is intended for magazine publication, you should be able to read some copies of their published magazines to find out the editor's preference for speech marks or any other formatting. If still in doubt, ask the editorial staff directly.*

*Be careful to follow all the competition requirements, including word length and other formats. Regarding word count, I allow about 10% difference from what is asked for, either too short or too long, unless I have requested an exact word count. You also need to make sure your name, title, word count (and any other specific requirements) are where they should be. These are listed at the back of the CW magazine, as well as on the competition topics and criteria page, but if you have lost them or are unsure, you are welcome to ask the editor or the appropriate judge.*

## First Place



Caroline  
Cook  
of Auckland

## The Storms of Life

"It has been delightful screeching with you Mr Sparrow, but a storm is approaching so I am off to play."

"Play? Are you crazy Mr Eagle? Come and hide with me in my tree so the storm does not hurt you."

"My most exciting days are stormy days Mr Sparrow. I will not hide from them. Come and ride the storm with me. Then you will know why I like them."

"I feel petrified at the thought of it."

"You are safe with me Mr Sparrow. Climb into my wing and you will never be terrified of storms again." He took a deep breath and hopped into Mr Eagle's open wing.

"I am tucked in comfortably and I am ready for take-off Mr Eagle."

"Let's go Mr Sparrow. Hold on tight!"

"By golly. How do you take off at such a steep gradient Mr Eagle? I can't do that."

Totally focussed on the task at hand, Mr Eagle set his wings in place and allowed the storm to lift him above the clouds. He darted and weaved. Mr Sparrow peeked out in awe."

Too soon, Mr Eagle came to a stop. Mr Sparrow ventured out to perch beside him.

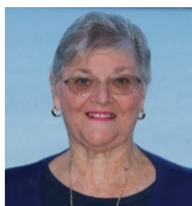
"That was the ride of my life, Mr Eagle. Now I understand why you like storms. I have never seen a storm before. I have only heard them from inside my hiding place. They really are exciting, aren't they?"

Mr Eagle's body vibrated with laughter.

"Usually, eagles like to play alone but you showed me that playing together is better. Next time there is a storm, will you ride it with me Mr Sparrow?"

"Oh yes Mr Eagle. I never want to hide from storms again. I want to face them head on... from inside your wing."

## Second Place Equal



Jean  
Crane  
of Tauranga

## Been Lovely Chatting

Eagle was relaxing on the power line when his peace was shattered by Sparrow.

"Hi there Eagle, beautiful day isn't it?"

"What do you want?" demanded Eagle. "Leave me alone."

"Why do you want to be left alone? Being with other birds is so much better."

"No, it's not. Chatter is annoying, just like your incessant chirping now."

"I do love talking and especially singing. Do you sing Eagle?"

"No, I don't."

"You should try singing, it's great fun. My friends and I sing every morning and evening."

"Well it's not my kind of fun," snapped Eagle.

“Oh look, there’s a good looking bird. She would make a great partner. Might chat her up later.”

“What do you mean, partner? Don’t you have a lifetime mate?”

“A lifetime mate! What a strange idea.”

“No, it’s not. You can trust your mate to be there to help prepare the nest and look after the chicks.”

“And where might this nest be?”

“On the highest tree in the forest.”

“Highest tree in the forest, you must be kidding! There’s no way I’d be living in the forest. Give me the city life any day. There’s always plenty to eat.”

“So, what is it you eat anyway?” probed Eagle.

“Most days it’s takeaways. The café humans are so kind with their crumbs.”

“That’s disgusting!” retorted Eagle. “How can you be so common as to let humans feed you? Don’t you ever hunt for food?”

“Hunt for food! How do you do that?”

“I swoop over a river, spot a fish, and catch it with my talons.”

“Wow that is impressive, but too much like hard work,” trilled Sparrow. “I know I’m not as imposing as you Eagle, but I’m happy to be a small, common bird. Been lovely chatting. Bye.”

## Second Place Equal



Pauline  
Marshall  
of Christchurch

## A Dialogue of Difference

A sparrow and an eagle chat one day.

‘So, talking about differences, it’s a pity you are so – ah, puny.’ The eagle glares scathingly at the sparrow.’

‘Oh, I don’t mind at all,’ chirps the sparrow, flitting to a higher branch. ‘It suits my style actually. I can explore tiny places and score tiny seeds. Tiny is great. Now if I had a monstrous beak and claws, like ...

‘Like mine, you mean?’ The eagle opens his enormous hooked beak and lifts a talon. ‘These are part of my powerful weaponry, for subduing my prey.’

The sparrow flits higher still. ‘That is so gross, eagle, and so uncaring towards smaller creatures, if I may say so.’

‘Really? And do you care about the tiny grubs that you feast on daily?’

‘Well, they’re only ... ah, yes, I see your point, eagle. Anyway’ – he fluffs his feathers – ‘Humans love us, so we hang out near them. Actually, they feed us; it’s about mutual benefit.’

‘That is so co-dependent,’ crows the eagle. ‘Independence is far superior.’

‘And we have dust baths. It’s great fun.’

A waste of time,’ retorts the eagle. ‘Unprofitable, in the big picture of things.’ He thrusts out his neck. ‘Anyway, I haven’t got time to hear any more twittering – you do go on rather. To summarise, I’m all for independence, power and long-range vision. You’re crazy about togetherness, having fun and needing humans. Correct?’

‘True. But remember, we’re both still birds, aren’t we? We both have feathers, we fly, we lay eggs ...’

‘We have beaks.’

‘True,’ chirps the sparrow. ‘And claws.’

‘Actually, mine are talons.’ The eagle stretches his wings. ‘Well, I think we’re done here. We’ve clarified view-points. Mission accomplished. I’m off hunting.’

‘Oh, if you don’t mind, eagle, would you mind flying off first?’

## Level Three

**Judge: Julia Martin**

**Requirement:** Write a funny story starting with the line: “You’ll never guess what happened...” 300 words maximum.

### General Comments

#### *Writing Humorous Stories*

*The old saying ‘Laughter is the best medicine’ has a ring of truth to it, because humour – whether spoken or written, can lift the spirit and ease tension in the body.*

*Funny stories are entertaining but aren’t always easy to write. Humour is subjective, so what one person finds hilarious, may irritate someone else. Humour can vary from one nationality to another; e.g. British and American comedy.*

*Some points to consider:*

- *The best funny stories are good stories told in a funny way.*
- *Humour needs to evolve and present itself naturally.*
- *Don't overdo humour. It should simply complement the story.*
- *Don't try to be funny for the sake of being funny.*
- *Humour can revolve around characters, their dialogue, and how they interact with one another in a situation.*
- *Good comedy can rely on the unexpected and unpredictable.*
- *Reality can be stretched slightly in comedy.*
- *Don't tell the reader something is funny by using dialogue tags such as 'he joked' or 'she chuckled'.*
- *Avoid exclamation marks. The humour should be natural and obvious.*
- *Do not use offensive language or crudity.*

*While this assignment has a compulsory beginning, it was important to develop the story quickly to capture the attention of the reader. Likewise, I was looking for a memorable ending, possibly with an unpredictable twist.*

*I awarded John Lindsay first place because his entry was exactly what I was looking for. His story leads in naturally from the set opening. He has chosen to write it entirely in dialogue and he doesn't waste words with dialogue tags as it's obvious who is speaking each time.*

*The interaction between the phone salesperson and the hapless customer keeps the humour flowing throughout the conversation. The ending has an unexpected surprise and the humour stayed with me and that's one of the marks of successful writing.*

*The other three entries I received were interesting but were more intriguing than humorous.*

*I awarded Keith Willis second place for his retelling of a well-known Bible story. While there are hints of humour here, it didn't strike me as particularly funny.*

*Pat Kerr and Jean Shewan received third place equal for their stories. Both entries were interesting and well told but weren't comical enough to score higher marks.*

*I would like to thank these members for consistently entering the competitions and attempting different genre. It can only help to make them better writers.*

## **First Place**



John  
Lindsay

of Christchurch

## **Mobile Muddle**

You'll never guess what happened when I went to the phone store.



"Hi. Looking for a phone?"

"Aye, a phone."

"An iPhone? Apple's a good choice."

"Yes, I'm fond of apples. And I don't mind the older varieties."

"Of course. They still give everything you'd want."

"And juicy."

"That's one of their strengths. Plenty of juice. Keep you going right through the day."

"I know. I have a friend who starts with apple at breakfast. He wouldn't have anything else and I'm amazed at the energy hours later when I'm nodding off."

"So, what's important to you?"

"In a phone?"

"Yes."

"I was confused when you mentioned apples. Then I was worried you'd try and sell me a lemon."

"No chance of that, sir. Now, how do you want to use your phone? Will you be taking photos? What about apps?"

"Photos? No I want to talk on it, not send pictures."

"And what size screen?"

"Screen? Not sure about those. They don't have any numbers on them. How could I make calls if there weren't any numbers."

"Hmm. I'm thinking you might be best with a clamshell."

"No, no. You don't seem to understand, I'm here to buy a phone. All this talk about fruit and sea food is hurting my head."

"Then let me show you."

"Please."

"And then we can look at a plan."

"No, I don't need to see the plan. I don't understand electronics."

"Well, you can go without a plan, but I didn't think you'd be interested in a burner."

“A burner? I didn’t come here looking for kitchen stuff. I want a phone.”

After that troubled start, we finally came to an understanding. I bought an iPhone 7 and as a bonus I’ve been introduced to a new friend. Her name is Siri.

## Second Place



Keith  
Willis

of  
Kaukapakapa

## Up, Up and Away

You’ll never guess what happened this morning! The gang came to collect me as they often do. Some people call them “The Trouble Makers.” Certainly sometimes they are at odds with the authorities, but they are very good to me. They often include me in their somewhat dubious activities, even though they need to carry me. “Come on! That healer man we told you about; We know where he is staying.” But when we got there we couldn’t get near because of the huge crowd. So my friends, always resourceful, even if showing little respect for conventional behaviour, lifted me onto the roof. They then started tearing a hole through the thatch above where Jesus was speaking.

You can imagine the commotion below. The house owner screaming abuse, others yelling to call the Roman guard, the old religious leaders frenziedly trying to get the falling debris out of their beards, whilst the younger members in the crowd were cheering us on. It must have seemed hilarious to an onlooker.

Once the hole was big enough, my friends lowered me down until I was sitting at the feet of Jesus. The crowd fell quiet as they waited to see what would happen. Jesus gently put a hand on my shoulder and looking into my eyes said, to my surprise, “Your sins are forgiven.”

That triggered the yelling to start again. My friends above were shouting, “No, you’ve got it all wrong! It’s not his sins, it’s his legs we want you to fix.” The old religious leaders were shouting, “That’s blasphemy. What right have you to forgive sin?”

Jesus held up his hand for silence and, looking into my eyes again, told me to stand up. So up I leaped!

I said you wouldn’t believe it, but it’s true.

## Third Place Equal



Jean  
Shewan  
of  
Christchurch

### An Unexpected Visitor

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You'll never guess what happened at last week's Scout open night! The scouts and cubs had been demonstrating some of the things they had learned during the year, when the hall door crashed open and a large man lurched in, owlishly peering round.

"Who's in charge? What ya doin'?"

His slurred words made everyone stir nervously. My father, Group Scout Master and MC of the evening, walked across and asked the man to draw aside so that they could speak without further disturbing the activities in progress.

"What'ya talking about? Who're all these people?"

Despite my father's imposing stature, the man advanced into the room. By this time, the game the youngsters had been playing had been abandoned and all eyes were on the intruder.

"Playing silly games eh? Where's the grub and the booze? You don't make a bloke feel very welcome. Thought this was a party."

"Let me get him. I'll get rid of him." My Uncle Arthur, whose temper was unreliable at the best of times, leapt to his feet with bunched fists, but the intruder stood his ground, glaring round and fidgeting with his clothing. Once again, my Father intervened, and his whispered conversation with my Uncle calmed him immediately and sent him back to his seat laughing to himself.

Surprisingly all the fight suddenly went out of the drunken man. He turned and shambled to the door, disappearing into the cold night without a backward glance. A babble of talk started, but before things got out of hand my father directed,

"All scouts get into your patrols and write down as many details as you can remember of that man's clothes, and words!"

A big sigh of relief went round the room. It had been a set up – a novel way of testing the Scouts' observation skill

## Third Place Equal



Pat Kerr  
of Roxburgh

## Royal Visitors

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You'll never guess what happened one day when my friend Margi and I were studying at Otago University library, our place of choice. It was warm, quiet and the books we needed were reference ones. Margi was studying Greek. I was studying Geography. Our table was near the entrance.

The library was abnormally quiet. Why? Outside Dunedin was in a royal flush. The Britannica was moored in the harbour. Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip had brought Prince Charles and Princess Anne to New Zealand to introduce them to loyal followers. Flags and bunting flapped from every available surface and in the hands of devoted fans. George Street was drowning in well wishers wanting to see the Royals driving past.

On this day in 1973 the Queen broke with tradition making the first Royal Walkabout. Somehow the new University Library, two blocks from George Street was included.

Margi and I looked up to watch the kerfuffle. Dusters, flowers and red carpet...red carpet...were being rolled out. We were intrigued. Would we be asked to leave? We hadn't dressed up. Had Prince Charles broken away from the cavalcade? (Bad luck Margi, you are married, but I'm not!)

Press photographers and officials pressed inside. There was a hush. Four Royals entered. And they came straight for our table. We were gobsmacked. Do we stay sitting, or stand up and curtsy? We were not out greeting the Royals. They were visiting us! Prince Philip's keen eye roved over the textbooks. Noticing Margi's Greek tomes he came over and chatted to her in Greek. I sat tongue-tied.

Royals are people, just like us but they are so tiny.

Margi and I looked at each other and laughed. Did that just happen or what?

We were on TV that night. Us!

# Competitions for February 2021

Due by January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

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](mailto:level1@nzchristianwriters.org)**

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

**Level One**—for members 16 years old and over

**Requirement:** Using the 10 words **bag, mirror, table, bushy, mug, bell, screech, switch, bark** and **relief** at least once in your entry, write a humorous story with an unexpected outcome and an unpreachy takeaway message. 500 words.

**Email entry to** Debbie McDermott at [level1@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:level1@nzchristianwriters.org)



*Debbie*

**Level Two**—for members 16 years old and over

**Requirement:** Using a traditional rhythm and rhyming style, write a poem summarising the key points in the six parables Jesus told in Matthew 13. Summarise only one parable per verse. (6 verses maximum, each 4 lines long)

**Email entry to** Lesley Edgeler at [level2@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:level2@nzchristianwriters.org)



*Lesley*

**Level Three**—for members 16 years old and over

**Requirement:** Write an article for our *Young Christian Writer* magazine outlining the reasons you believe writing is a worthwhile pursuit. (300 words)

**Email entry to** Julia Martin at [level3@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto: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.