

APRIL - MAY 2021

THE CHRISTIAN Writer

SEE INSIDE FOR

Book Launches!

Articles:

- Confused About Editing?
- The Publishing Journey of Annie Browne

Poetry

Book Reviews:

- Second Son – Inception
- God Moments In an Ordinary Life

Writing Competitions and more



A magazine of NZ Christian Writers



Mission: *Connecting Christian writers in New Zealand.*

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

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

President: Justin St Vincent: president@nzchristianwriters.org

Editor: Kathryn Paul: editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Debbie Smith

For subscriptions, donations, address changes: treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org

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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

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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

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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CW Competitions

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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

President's Report



Welcome to the Apr-May 2021 edition of *The Christian Writer*! We are excited to be hosting our Retreat 2021 from April 29th to May 2nd 2021 at Flaxmill Retreat Centre in

Whitianga. We will be learning from our inspirational keynote speakers: Staci McLean, Karen McMillan, Eugene Moreau, and Phil Strong. Each of them will bring two special seminar sessions to upskill each of us on our writing journey. If you feel you would benefit from our Retreat, we can accept some last-minute bookings.

A reminder that our AGM 2021 will take place on May 2nd 2021 at our Retreat where we will be appointing and renewing officers that represent members of our Board. A full AGM 2021 and Retreat 2021 report will be available in our Jun-Jul 2021 magazine. I'm excited and positively expectant for what God will do during this new season with our writers, now 300-plus in number throughout New Zealand. In addition, one of the key projects our Board will be developing over the next 18-24 months is a 40th Anniversary Book ready for release at our Retreat 2023.

Congratulations to our cover photography winner for this edition: Caroline Cook. She found this perfect writing spot at the Franz Josef Top 10 Holiday Park, and we thought it would provide inspiration to share that you can write anywhere. In fact, Caroline wrote the entry for her first NZ Christian Writers competition in that exact location. We will continue to share the winners of our photographic competition on the covers of the next four magazines for 2021. The cover photo of our previous issue was taken by Imelda Cruz Wood and we apologise for not mentioning the location. Imelda's photo was taken at Awhitu Peninsula, Waiuku.

Our local groups are a fantastic way to develop your writing skills, gain insights from like-minded writers, and connect with others in our community throughout NZ. Please remember our local group leaders are available to help connect you to a community of writers in your area. Together our goal for local groups is to help encourage and inspire a community of Christian writers. Feel free to contact our leaders to find out more about their next meeting dates, times and locations. Contact details, plus locations of our local group leaders are available here: www.nzchristianwriters.org/groups/

We trust you enjoy reading this new edition of *The Christian Writer*.

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

Editorial: Let's Tsunami!

by Kathryn Paul



I confess when I was young I picked up the wrong idea that being a published author really made a person a 'somebody'. I can't recall when or where it was that I first saw a proud and haughty expression on a published author's face, but it imprinted on my mind. I thought, *'Wow, that person really thinks highly of themselves so it must be really near the top of the ladder to be that successful.'*

By the time I became a published author fortunately I had enough of God's Word in my heart to understand a proud and haughty look isn't a good or helpful thing. It has been valuable for me to discover what it means to be humble and yet confident. I'm not confident because of any achievements, but because of who I am in Christ and His great love for me. He owns the glory for everything good in my life. I am insignificant next to His amazing greatness! Although so tiny in comparison to Him, I am so greatly loved.

God has shifted my original writing goal of becoming a successful, selling author, to being a writer who makes an impact for God's Kingdom. I want to see souls saved for the Lord! As more Christian writers get their God-inspired work published, it's like spreading a fishing net, long and wide. Meshed together we are one net reaching out to people He is calling to be His own.

I don't want to be the only Christian writer getting my work out there; that would be like a pebble in the ocean. My published work will cause a ripple effect and yours will as well, but together we can cause a Tsunami! Therefore, I'm grateful to be a part of NZ Christian Writers and glad you are members too. I encourage you to keep going with that writing goal of yours.

Let's stay humble, confident and make big waves together, with and for Jesus!

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



Are we not moving forward in our Christian life because we don't want to make waves?

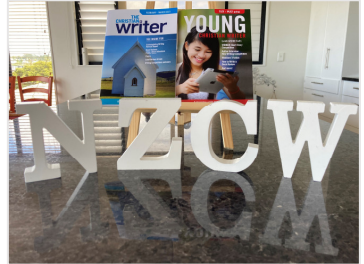
A boat at anchor doesn't disturb the water. Only after leaving the mooring does it break the water and send out ripples. A boat makes waves when it is under full sail or powered by motor. Though the waves may disturb other vessels, the boat also creates a wake which makes sailing easier for the vessels that follow.

By freechristianillustrations.com.

Notices

NZCW Retreat 2021 – Grab a last-minute room and join the fun!

The anticipation is building for our Writers Retreat at Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga *Thursday 29th April to Sunday 2nd May 2021*. See the poster on page five for our list of exciting guest speakers! If you're not booked yet, visit www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2021/ to register. Attendees are encouraged to carpool. Home-baking to share is welcome. See you there!



NZCW Annual AGM 2nd May 2021

Please note our Annual AGM will be held at the NZCW Writers Retreat in Whitianga. The AGM is a brief meeting where our Board members are elected or reappointed.

Book Launches: Verna McFelin's memoir, The Invisible Sentence

Oamaru Library, Thames St, Oamaru

Friday, 9th April

6.00 – 7.30 pm **AND**

Christchurch, Empower Church, 170 Springfield Rd

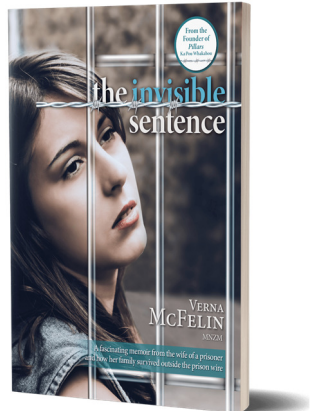
Thursday, 22nd April

7.00 – 9.00 pm

Eftpos available and book signings. RSVP:

verna.mcfelin@gmail.com or you can just turn up on the night.

Everyone welcome!



Book Launch: Writing to Make a Difference

by George Bryant, QSM, JP, MA (Hons)

Where and When: NZCW Writers Retreat, (as per the advertisement at the top of this page).

Copies will be available to all Retreat attendees!

For more information about George's books visit: www.georgebryant.co.nz

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.

Writers Group Leaders Wanted

We need leaders in the Waikato and North Auckland regions due to high membership growth. Please email president@nzchristianwriters.org for more information if you're keen to have a go!

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. 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/ 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: 027 440 5851

E: gpetersen@hotmail.co.nz

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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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- 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 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

Confused About Editing?

by George Bryant, *QSM, JP, MA (Hons)*



For more than a decade I've been publishing books for other people. Time and again writers are confused about the editing process.

What is an editor? Do I really need one? What do they do? How much do they cost? What's the difference between structural and copy editing, and proofreading?

It is absolutely vital that all work is professionally edited. Sometimes writers tell me they have had their manuscript 'professionally' edited but I soon find mistakes galore and have to re-edit it myself. Often this is because of a writer's confusion about what sort of editing has taken place.

Let me clarify.

1. **A GOOD MANUSCRIPT.** The writer needs to work hard at a manuscript until it is as good as he/she can present it, that is, through self-editing.
2. **READERS.** The manuscript should be handed to several people for comment, people who know something about writing. Feedback from peers is essential, and we need to be humble enough to receive both the negative as well as the positive comments, altering our script accordingly.
3. **CRITIQUE.** Gaining an overall critique of a manuscript is valuable. The 'readers' may do some of this but, as a publisher, I usually offer an author a brief overall constructive critique of their work, in terms of producing a book for public consumption. Some editors will do this, for a fee.
4. **STRUCTURAL (or developmental) EDIT.** Sometimes this is worked on with the author during the actual writing of the book, especially if it's a novel.

Is the structure of the book well organised? Is it likely to keep the reader interested? Do the chapters flow on from one another? Is the content presented in a way that will keep the reader interested? Does it fit the target audience? Is it the right title? Should some material form an appendix? What about the tone and style? Is the material marketable? With a novel, characterisation, plot, setting and other factors could be discussed under 'structure'.

Some writers become upset at this process but they need to realise that an editor/publisher is looking at their work in terms of a finished book that will sell. No manuscript is perfect, whatever the author might think!

In collaboration with the author a publisher will suggest changes aimed to improve the book's readability.

5. **COPY EDIT.** After the publisher and author have worked through structural considerations then it's time for a copy edit.

This involves a sentence-by-sentence analysis of grammar, spelling, word choice, awkward phrasing, tenses, paragraphing, repetition, punctuation, inconsistencies, capitalisation... all in order to make the script readable. An editor does not change an author's ideas, but helps them flow better.

Most professional editors use a red mark-up system, with comments. Some may simply mark a hard copy.

The author may or may not accept the suggested changes.

Copy editing is an important process. Before a manuscript is paginated there need to be as few errors as possible. It can become quite expensive to correct a lot of mistakes once the book has been paged.

6. **PROOFREADING.** Once the book is paged (galley proofs or uncorrected proofs) it is PROOFREAD preferably by someone other than the author, although he/she can do so as well.

It's confusing to use the word 'proofreading' for just a close reading of the original manuscript.

A proofreader carefully looks for any mistakes that have occurred in the process of paging the book, such as poor syllabification of a word at the end of the line, wrong page numbers, 'orphans and widows', and captions for photos. Sometimes copy errors are also found.

So, when a publisher asks you if your manuscript has been professionally edited he/she wants to know (i) if its structure has been carefully considered, and (ii) if it has been thoroughly checked for punctuation, grammar etc.

Ensure you know exactly what aspect of your manuscript is being edited when you present it. Some editors will do both while others will do only one of them – which may mean paying twice!

The whole aim of good editing is to help your text flow better – quality control. This is something you really shouldn't attempt yourself.

*George has only 30 copies remaining of his latest book **Life IS...** and he intends to reprint. They are now available at a 50% discount i.e. \$15 instead of the RRP of \$27.95, and postage free.*

For more information about George's books visit:

www.georgebryant.co.nz or www.daystarbooks.org

WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian Writing of
today and yesteryear –

Series by Frederick Swallow



Henry J. Heinz

At 12 years of age in 1856, Henry J. Heinz grew vegetables and bottled and sold food sauces. His enterprise grew but suffered in a national financial crisis.

He repaid debts from a *Moral Obligations Book (MOB)*. With new lines the Heinz range sold well again and he provided many staff benefits.

Henry's parents taught him the Christian life was the best life. He supported Sunday Schools. His last will was headed 'The most important item in it is knowing Jesus Christ as my Saviour'. He entered Heaven at the age of 75.

Clouds

by Janet Fleming

Each day as I look at the sky above
I am blessed by the pictures I see,
For it seems that God is painting the sky
With such beautiful artistry.

There are streaky clouds, there are fluffy
ones

And clouds that are coloured and bright,
Each cloud, it speaks of the Master's
touch

They are such a magnificent sight.

The heavens declare the glory of God,
With a beauty that never grows old,
And in each picture God paints above
A different story is told.

Some tell that tomorrow will still be fine
Or that rain is coming this way,
While others show to the watching eye
It will be windy today.

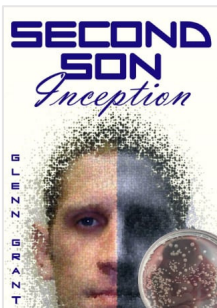
In life there are clouds that come along,
That sometimes sadden the heart,
When pain and bereavement have
touched our way
And our lives are torn apart.

But still I can trust though my tears may
fall

For my life is in God's hand
Though now my heart is heavy with pain,
Yet, one day I'll understand.

As I look to my Father, who loves me,
though

The clouds grow dark as night,
I know that one day He will call for me
To go to His home of light.



Second Son - Inception

By Glenn Grant

Review by Janette Busch

www.glennggrantwriting.com

Second Son - Inception is the first in a five-book series. The series follows two key characters over 30 years: their trials, triumphs and the eventual selection of one of them to become the single world leader.

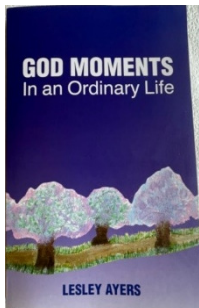
Providing the foundation for the subsequent books, *Inception* tells the story of Sven Granger, a dedicated believer and head of research and development at the Government Obstetrics Department (G.O.D.) who is involved in medical research. Although strongly against abortion, his beliefs and relationships are challenged by the medical, moral and spiritual aspects of human cloning.

Granger's protagonist is Senator Prevari, a career politician, Grand Wizard, coven head and pro-abortionist and the driving force behind creating the first human clone.

As the spiritual realm reveals itself through the book, Granger and his team are hurled into spiritual warfare. Angelic forces galvanised by prayers of faith confront the demonic who possess and protect their followers to bring about Satan's second son of perdition.

The beginning of the book has a list of the people and angels on God's team, and the people and demonic on Lucifer's team. As the drama of this story increased, I found this a welcome addition to the book to refresh my memory of who was who.

The series, *Second Son*, is based on truths gained from the personal lives of the author and others. *Inception* is a dramatic and fast-moving story that I couldn't stop reading.



God Moments In an Ordinary Life

By Lesley Ayers

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Your Books
2020

With our finite minds, it's not easy to grasp the fact that the God of the universe would orchestrate incidents in our everyday lives that show his presence, love and concern for his people.

In this small book, Lesley shares what she calls 'God moments'. She describes incidents and encounters with people she's met over the years, often while out walking or traveling by public transport, both here and overseas.

She recognizes a common thread running through these episodes. At times she has been in just the right place and time to meet the need of another person, while on other occasions the reverse has happened, and she's been on the receiving end of help and encouragement she needed.

While sceptics may dismiss these encounters as random chance or coincidence, Lesley has lived the Christian life long enough to recognize God's perfect timing and intervention in her everyday life.

Lesley has found God often works in unexpected places and through the most unlikely people. She notes: 'The God of the unexpected doesn't take conventional pathways'.

I believe this little book will be an encouragement and challenge to Christians to make themselves available for divine appointments that will not only strengthen their faith but also result in blessings for themselves and others. Available from ayerslesley@gmail.com.

Purpose Driven Writers Retreat

Held 13th-14th Feb 2021

Report by Janene Forlong

Author of *Where Fear Rules* and *Coming Home*

I had the pleasure of attending the first ever Purpose Driven Writers weekend retreat recently at Hoatu Kaimua Lodge in the Kaimai Ranges. The course was facilitated by Aver Ministries with presenter Kerri Price who has been writing and speaking for 20 years. She is an exceptional speaker and is well-respected in both church and community circles.

The course covered an in-depth framework on how to write a book, the pros and cons of traditional versus self-publishing, a comprehensive marketing plan and an excellent unit on social media by Sina Steele.

It was remarkably rich in content, creatively delivered and professionally led from start to finish while keeping us completely captivated the whole way through. It is the perfect course for beginners, those with little experience and it is still valuable for those with a few books under their belts.

One of the neat things that happened there was that some of the writers received a download of their book from the Lord. They received the chapters, the title, the layout and a deep passion to write their books. I personally was re-inspired to finish the one that has been on my heart for about a year now.

I highly recommend this course to all writers, whether you write fiction, non-fiction, poetry or other. You will gain so much knowledge on how to overcome the many challenges along the way and you will make a crowd of new friends who are on a similar page to you in life.

The next Aver Ministries Writers Retreat will be 9am, Saturday 19th June to 3pm, Sunday 20th June 2021 at Parua Bay Christian Youth Camp, 1 Wharf Road, Parua Bay (Whangarei Heads). The cost is \$295 per person. This includes meals and accommodation in bunk style dorms. Email kerri@averministries.com for more information or visit averministries.com.



Kerri Price of Aver Ministries lives onboard a 50ft catamaran in the South Pacific.

Join a Writers Group

AUCKLAND, ELLERSLIE

Sara McGuire
sara.mcguire81@gmail.com

CHRISTCHURCH

Dave Palmer
Mob: (027) 216 5743
davepalmer@xtra.co.nz

HAWKES BAY

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WELLINGTON

Paul Devereux
Mob: (022) 053 3618
paulrdevereux@xtra.co.nz

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

www.nzchristianwriters.org/groups/

WELCOME New Members and Renewals:

Vivienne Ball

Lower Hutt

Jennifer Balmer

Tauranga

Shirleen Casey

Tauranga

Stephen Douglas

Lower Hutt

Mary-Pat Ross

Kerikeri

Joanne Watt

Auckland

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

REMEMBER!

***Young Christian Writer* magazine needs contributors and new student members.**

Send in your short story, poetry, art etc and share the magazine with youth in your area. Thanks!

Rebekah's Diary

by Julia Martin

I didn't sleep a wink last night. It's hardly surprising as so much has happened in the last few hours.

Yesterday started out as normal. I rose early, carried out my usual mundane chores, and then later in the day I returned to the spring to draw water for the household.

At the well I suddenly sensed company and there behind me were strangers – an older man accompanied by servants with ten camels loaded with goods.

The older man approached me and politely asked for a drink of water. As I gave him a drink, I noticed the state of the camels. They'd obviously travelled a long way and were desperate for water. On impulse, I offered to water the camels as well. This was a huge undertaking and I was conscious that the older man was watching my every movement.

When the job was completed, the man asked whose daughter I was and if there was room in my father's house for the night. I told him whose family I belonged to and assured him that there would be a room and food for them all. With that, he pulled out a gold nose ring and two beautiful gold bracelets and gave them to me.

I dropped my jar and ran on ahead to tell my family what had happened. My brother Laban, seeing my jewellery and hearing my story, hurried out to meet the group at the well. He brought them back to our home and offered them hospitality.

Before eating their meal, the older man paused to explain his mission.

He spoke of his master Abraham who was a relative of our family; describing his wealth and possessions and the fact of his son's birth in their old age and how this son required a wife to carry on the family line. He explained how the wife must come from his family clan and not from a local Canaanite family because Isaac was the chosen line through which God would create a nation that would be a blessing to the entire world.

Listening in the background, it occurred to me that I was the one chosen by God to be part of His plan. My father and brother were pleased to accept the proposal as they also saw it as God's will. The older man brought out gold and silver jewellery and articles of clothing for me, and costly gifts for my brother and mother. The man bowed down to the ground before the Lord and claimed his prayers had been answered and the deal completed.

This morning the visitors arose and planned to set off immediately, taking me with them. But it was all too soon. All so rushed. My family could see my distress and asked that I stay for at least ten days, as there was so much to plan and prepare.

The older man declined and said they must leave today to return to their master 900 kms away.

My family called me and asked, "Will you go with this man today?" With my mind in a turmoil, I reasoned with myself.

'What if I don't like the man I must marry? Will I ever see my family and friends again?

It's all too much, but do I really have a choice? I could say 'no'. I could play for time and feign an illness or accident. And yet – it's obviously God's will for my life. The boxes are all ticked and there are too many coincidences for this whole plan to be a matter of chance or fate.

So that's it. I've made up my mind. I will trust in my God and throw caution to the wind. I'll say 'yes' and I'll leave today – come what may. I'll go with them and become this man's wife – for better or for worse!

Julia wrote this short piece after studying the passage in Genesis 25.

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Crossword

by Eion Field

Clues Across:

1. Cargo of "God's Smuggler"
3. Have information 7. New Testament Book
8. Break between classes 10. The very beginning
13. Hurricane or Spitfire
16. City of Saul (who became St Paul)
17. Fog 18. Near to
19. A contributor to this magazine

Clues Down:

1. Husband of Ruth
2. Recovered from illness
4. Word used in Advent Hymns
5. A virtue, when sound advice is needed
6. City whose walls fell 9. Earnest and sincere
11. "Now hear this. . ." 12. Portray
14. Haul 15. Agitate (best done with a spoon)

(Solution page 22)

Hope

by Carole Soole

God's everlasting
hands
Hold you safe today
The future is unknown
But God will find a
way.

Nothing is impossible
With God by your side
Reach for the heavens
Let your faith arise.

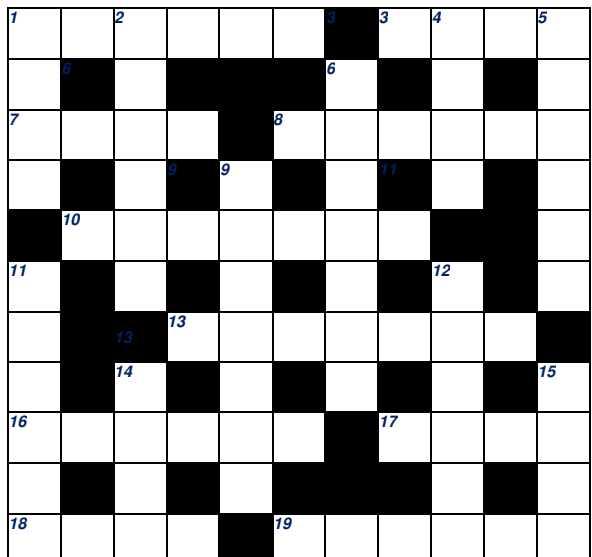
Trust in God alone
He is faithful and true
He loves you my child
And wants the best for
you.

Be joyful and sing
Worship and pray
Lift up your hands
Feel freedom today.

Deliverance will come
A new peace and joy
Hope and a future
His countenance
employ.

Hebrews 10:23

*Let us hold
unswervingly to the
hope we profess, for
He who promised is
faithful.*



The Publishing Journey of Annie Browne

(Also known as Glennis Browne)



I came into this world with a fire in my belly to write. As a child, I wrote in a school exercise book, twelve chapters about a fictional girl; Beth, the orphan. I wish I had kept that exercise book. My books are on similar themes - feeling the pain of unfair treatment and women being second class citizens. Their emotional struggles and drive to change the way life is, is the theme throughout.

In the late 1990s, when I lived in Kerikeri, Northland, I began researching my family background on ancestry sites. My husband and I moved to Australia to live closer to our children who now had children. We bought a caravan and explored the country, travelling to places that I'd discovered were where my great grandparents had lived. Once I returned home, I researched further, finding information of which my parents were unaware. I knew my grandmother had been born at Coalville in Victoria in 1898.

After ancestry researches of births, deaths, marriages and newspaper clippings, it became apparent a story was waiting to be shared.

My writing experience began. I knew nothing about publishing and didn't have a social media presence. A vanity press company were happy to take my money and stepped me through the publishing process. The first book somehow missed the editing process. I'd edited as best I could, but on seeing my printed book discovered how terrible my grammar was. The company agreed they had not performed the job I had paid them for and decided to re-edit and re-publish. I shortened and reformed the chapters before I submitted it.

I'd learnt a lot by now, having signed up for two editing programmes online. I used the vanity press to publish my second novel as I'd paid for it while in the buzz of working on both books in the series. My social media presence was developing as were my skills creating artwork from photographs on the computer. I made my first web page. Now I was into publicity, which hasn't helped my sales a lot.

My first royalty payment was for \$99 Australian earned predominantly by buying stock, which I sold at weekend stalls and to friends. I was giving away a lot – all good for promotion. Author friends were telling me self-publishing was now in vogue. This required patience and perseverance and skill development on the computer. I discovered a self-publishing company with a simple programme making it easy. Cover production followed, and a friend skilled in graphic and video production took up the challenge.

I re-published the first two books, changing their names and used a pen name, to differentiate from the vanity press books. I began book three. We returned to New Zealand to live and after two years of settling in it was time to finish book three and four, as my faithful readers were asking about them, having had a long wait.

Now, book three is published, following a pre-release campaign on Amazon in February 2021. Book four is at the stage of revision and editing. The set should be completed mid-2021.

I've learnt about the advantages of single markets and going wide. Marketing and promotion continue including producing short videos and using social media. Building followers using posts and comments is a daily activity.

I have also learnt via several social media writing courses. My favourite writing skills came from Grammarly Premium and Autocrit, where sentence structure and comma usage began to make sense.

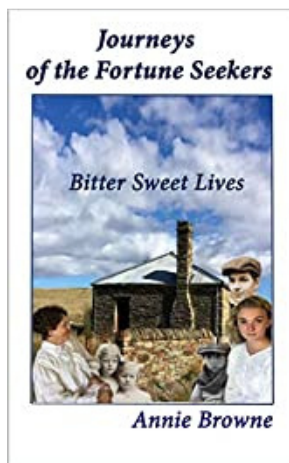
Will I write more books in the future? Without a doubt I will.

About the books:

Annie Browne explores the excesses, attitudes, hopes and aspirations of Australian and New Zealand families during the late 1800s. The first two historical novels in the series are *Bitter-Sweet Lives* and *Power and Authority*. The third book is *Temperance*. The fourth book, completing the series is *Secrets* to be published mid-2021.

Annie Browne lives in New Zealand with her husband, Shih Tzu puppy, (also Annie) and is the proud parent of two adult sons, a delightful daughter-in-law and two wonderful grandsons. Over many years the author has researched families and their stories, discovering incredible incidents. By telling these stories fictionally the characters come alive, bringing the readers with them on a journey that answers many of the 'why' questions they consider throughout their lives.

In Book One, Dan and Charlotte chose to live their lives far from Britain's restraining social principles during the mid-1800s. It was not comfortable bringing up a family while mining during the gold rush frenzies when colonists dragged their large families around Australia. Through a moving storyline, the many challenges and expectations of society that affected British families migrating to Australia, become real.



In Book Two, younger characters, Tottie and Daniel, marry and live on a dairy farm in Gippsland, in rural Victoria, Australia - a prosperous coal-bearing colony. Mining is in Dan's blood. Tottie, who appreciates the advantages of living close to her parents and siblings, struggles accepting life living away from them. Dan's upbringing has been different from hers, and he is restless. Friction builds, creating raw emotions and problems that need resolving.



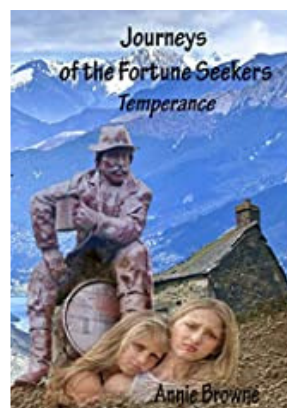
When Book Two ends, you are left wondering whether Tottie will accept Dan's decision to leave Coalville and migrate to New Zealand. It appears to be a hopeless goal for Daniel to achieve as Tottie has become a headstrong woman who knows what she wants.

We begin Book Three on New Year's Eve as the cuckoo-clock chimes away the final minutes of the 1800s. The year of 1899 rolls over starting the new millennium. What lies ahead for the family?

Become lost in the world of change, tension, tears, and war, joining Tottie as she overcomes her insecurities.

Then, look out for the story's conclusion – *Secrets* will be published in 2021.

The series *Journeys of the Fortune Seekers* can be found online including through Amazon.



Visit <https://www.amazon.com/gp/kindle/series/B08VW74HFB>



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<https://www.kobo.com/nz/en/ebook/dog-tucker>

Children's Novel for 10-14 years old.

Published by Scholastic NZ.

Or ask a bookstore for a printed copy.

Crossword Solution for page 18

ACROSS

1.Bibles 3.Know 7.Acts 8.Recess 10.Genesis 13.Fighter 16.Tarsus 17.Mist 18.Nigh
19.Writer

DOWN:

1.Boaz 2.Better 4.Noel 5.Wisdom 6.City whose walls fell 9.Serious 11.Listen
12.Depict 14.Drag 15.Stir

Writing Competitions Points Board

The competitions for 2021 are off to a great start! 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. Prizes up for grabs are: **\$60 for First Place**, **\$50 for Second Place**, **\$40 for Third place**.

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

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Liz Fitzmaurice	24	Pauline Marshall	24	Caroline Cook	27
Sheryl Paul	15	Jill Clarke	15	Jean Shewan	21
Rob Lake	15	Eion Field	12	Shirley Jamieson	15
Corrine Sinclair	12	Ella Hamlin	12	Pat Kerr	9
Regan Kim	9	Ruth Jamieson	9		

All entrants receive helpful feedback via email from the judge!

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Write a modern chorus or hymn relating to Jesus' death and resurrection. You may use an existing tune or write your own music if you prefer. The music score should be included with your entry, together with an MP3 recording if you have written your own music. (4 verses maximum, with a repeated refrain or bridge counted as 1 verse)

General Comments

Congratulations to the two people who entered and did very well in this competition. First Place went to Rob Lake for his moving contemporary chorus on the freedom Jesus won for us at the Cross. Also included with his entry was the music he wrote to accompany the song on a guitar, plus a good recording of it being played and sung. This enabled me to hear the melody and tempo of the piece (two important aspects I could not determine from the music which only consisted of chords) and I found both to be excellent. Apart from being easy to sing, Rob's song also has a powerful takeaway message. Hopefully, he will seek to share it with many and perhaps even record it professionally so it can have a far-reaching impact.

I awarded Second Place to Liz Fitzmaurice for her rousing Easter hymn which is to be sung to the marching music originally written for 'The People's Song' (otherwise known as 'Do you Hear the People Sing?'), and sung in the epic film and stage production, 'Les Miserables'. The chorus in Liz's hymn is particularly good, but there are some minor issues with tempo in the verses. I have discussed this with Liz in the critique I sent to her.

When writing a song to someone else's music, it is very important to:

- 1. Compare the words of the music writer's original song with your own, to ensure your syllable counts and stressed syllables/words are the same as theirs. Wrong syllable counts and/or incorrect placing of emphases can make it difficult to fit the words to the original music and make the song tricky to sing as a result.*
- 2. Obtain or download the original sheet music with the words included, to determine how many notes there are to each bar in the top melody staff and how the words of the original song fit to each bar and each note. If you are familiar with how to read music, the sheet music will also tell you what the tempo is, at the beginning of the piece. For instance, the tempo of 'The People's Song' is 12/8, meaning each alternate bar contains 12 beats and 8 beats respectively.*

While competition assignments like this one can be difficult for writers who are not poets or lyricists, I do encourage you to rise to the challenge and submit an entry anyway. Besides being an excellent exercise in learning how to tighten up your writing and creatively say a lot in just a few words, you may also discover you have a hidden talent.

First Place



Rob
Lake
of Porirua

The Cross a sign of Freedom

(Own lead sheet music provided)

E
As our lives seemed lost,
A E A E
When torture and cross they gave.
E A
For a time all hope was gone,
E A
And a darkness it had grown;
E B A
Three days they came and went,
E B A
Sorrow and loss all spent.

E
But Your Word is true,
A E A E
We can get through the pain.
E A
As you suffered for us all,
E A
As you help us when we call,
E B A
As Your body Lord, shed the cross,
E B A
No more we think of loss.
A E
The cross a sign of freedom,
A B E
The hope for all to come!
A E
Yes the cross a sign of freedom,
A B E
The hope of all to come!

E
We look again to You,
A E A E
Lord You came and lived with us.
E A
We follow in Your footsteps,
E A
On the path to righteousness.
E B A
Your grace so freely shows,
E B A
The love of our Father flows.

E
As we look to You,
A E A E
In heaven where You're the King.
E A
With the path to our God now made,
E A
Help the memories to fade,
E B A
The pain and the anguish gone,
E B A
With You ruling on the throne
A E
The cross a sign of freedom,
A B E
The hope for all to come!
A E
Yes the cross a sign of freedom,
A B E
The hope of all to come!

Second Place



Liz
Fitzmaurice
of Lower Hutt

Les Magnifique

To the tune of "Do you hear the people sing"
from Les Miserables

CHORUS: *Do you hear the people praise?
Singing the truth through endless days
It is the music of a people
who will not be slave to sin
Jesus died upon the cross
But he rose again to life
Promising life and hope to all
Who believe in him*

Jesus carried his own Cross
It was a humiliating trek
The crowds were there to scorn and mock
None were there to show respect
But Jesus endured the pain
and the suffering for us

CHORUS

Will you choose to follow Jesus?
Will you believe when life's unjust?
Beyond the empty grave
There is a saviour you can trust
The church is the hope
And the light that can set our world free

CHORUS

Level Two

Judge: Lesley Edgeler

Requirement: Write a new, modern parable or allegory that young teenagers can relate to. Ensure you use appropriate language and imagery that will clearly convey the Christian message you want to clearly get across to this age group. (450 words)

General Comments

Meaningful imagery, dialogue and illustrations from everyday life are all major components of parables or allegories. When writing parables human characters are essential. If animals become the main focus the stories then become fables as in those written by Aesop.

Parables, like stories, need a beginning, a middle and a conclusion. They must teach a lesson or have a take-away moral for the reader to contemplate, and if appropriate, take action.

*In his book, *The Parables: Understanding What Jesus Meant*, author Gary Inrig writes 'The Lord's parables bring encouragement because in them we meet ourselves and our God. They were nearly always told to answer a question or address a particular situation.' (*The Parables: Understanding What Jesus Meant*, Discovery house 1991 pp7,8.)*

For young teenagers the language should be clear and concise, relating to current issues or life lessons, exciting and challenging.

Jill Clarke's entry gained first place for impact, flow and her use of language teens will relate to. Her modern-day rendition of the Good Samaritan struck me as exactly what was needed for this competition.

I awarded second place to Ella Hamlin as her main character faces up to his responsibility for causing his friend to stay out of the surfing competition. Both boys wait for the competition to be over and the time seems interminable. Yet a pleasant surprise awaits them for their honesty.

Third place-getter, Pauline Marshall's clever contrast between a modern GPS and God's Global positioning system reflects different attitudes and their domino effects.

All entries received were well-written but these three stood out.

*While the majority of parables and allegories are usually short and impactful, readers would also enjoy full-length versions such as John Bunyan's *the Pilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan cleverly uses metaphors and abstract arguments as Christian and his companions find their way to the Celestial City amidst trials and trickery.*

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho is a magical story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who longs to search for treasure. Both stories teach object lessons and the consequences of good and bad decisions.

Contestants are encouraged to keep on entering competitions so as to enable them to improve their writing skills and find out which particular genre suits their writing abilities. Keep up the good work everyone!

First Place



Jill
Clarke
of Wanganui

A Good Samaritan – A Modern Parable

A young man was driving on a country road travelling home for a break before the start of a new university semester. The sound of a low flying plane distracted his thoughts with a hiss and a roar. The car stopped. Shaken he looked around. Removing himself carefully from his car he studied the landscape. A cloud of steam erupted from the car. He opened the bonnet, burning his hand with the heat. Water was spilling from the radiator. He needed help. He switched on hazard lights and kept the bonnet up to show he was in trouble. There was no cell phone coverage in this area which meant he could be stranded for some time.

It was hot in the sun. Hungry and thirsty he stood waiting for the sound of an oncoming vehicle.

At last! He stood beside the car signalling the driver to stop. As the van drove past, he noticed the Service Vehicle signage.

The day wore on. He sat in the car with all windows and doors open, trying desperately not to doze off to sleep. Another vehicle approached and again he made all the “Help Me” signs. It was no use. He recognised his mechanic’s car as he burned off down the road.

Another vehicle announced its arrival with altered muffler and rowdy exhaust. Big mag wheels skidded to a halt as the driver stopped beside the broken-down car.

“Hi Bro’, let me help you. I don’t know a lot but I’ve learned some by working on this monster.”

“The radiator must have sprung a leak and sucked all the excess water from the overflow tank. I thought I was being attacked by a sniper plane with the noise it made. Guess I’ll need a tow truck to get me home. I should have been with my Mum hours ago. Now it’s dark she’ll be worried.

“I’ll tow you to the garage and then you can come home with me for some kai. We’ll phone your whanau from my place and they can assure your Mum that you’re ok. Got an extra mattress. You can bunk down at mine. No-one at the garage at this hour. I’ll let my Bro know what’s happened.”

The Lord said “Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks at the heart.”
1 Sam 16:7 NIV

“He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you Except to be just, and to love [and to diligently practice] kindness (compassion), And to walk humbly with your God [setting aside any overblown sense of importance or self-righteousness].” **Micah 6:8 Amplified Bible**

Second Place



Ella
Hamlin
of Napier

Surf Lifesaving

Brad sat his Dad’s surf lifesaving trophy back on the family’s prize shelf, wishfully admiring the name engraved on its base. Ole Foster –a champion forever.

“What’s it like, being a National Champion?” he asked.

Ole Foster knew his son; keen to be a top lifeguard, like him when he rode the wave from junior to senior years ago.

“Worth the effort. Tomorrow’s your last crack at Junior National Champion”.

“There’s hundreds of athletes,” Brad complained. Mr Foster also knew, there was some hard work ahead for Brad tomorrow, as he chased the hope of his own trophy. Brad was good –a natural athlete, already strong. But the boy needed stickability and courage.

“And with them you’ll swim the surf, sprint the beach and paddle with your crew”. Brad’s shoulders slumped.

“There’s no way I can win against Steely Morgan,” he grumbled. Steely Morgan – the muscle machine, already a champ. At school he stole all the sports awards. Even last week, knocked out cold by a wild hockey ball, he scored player of the day. No doubt, tomorrow he’d take the Junior Surf Lifeguard Award, no matter what.

“There’s more to a champion than strength,” Brad’s father whispered. Brad got curious, though his chest fell further. What else? “Because of the danger, the most important thing a champion must know is to follow rules”. Brad had looked at the big red rule book. He felt dreadful.

Mr Foster recognized his son’s dilemma –the title, the glory, the discipline.

Brad squirmed. Mr Foster knew Brad was competent to compete, but no risk was worth taking if something was wrong.

“Is there a problem, Brad?”

Brad juggled.

“What’s a concussion event, Dad?” Steely Morgan’s head bash last week was the answer and the problem. “I wasn’t going to say. It’ll look like squeezing Steely out. It’s me that hit the wild hockey ball.”

Father and son saw eye to eye. Mr Foster got the phone. Brad prayed. Mr Morgan was furious. Nevertheless, a medical clearance was necessary for Steely to compete tomorrow. Everyone knew that was impossible.

Bedtime was agony.

“Son, being a National Champion is like understanding why we need the Bible. It may seem like a hard, off base, rule book, but to win in this world we must know laws are made for our benefit.”

Beach-time was torture. Steely and Brad had helped pack up the flags. Neither had swum, surfed, sprinted or paddled. Prizegiving was nearly over. Suddenly, there was a special award announced. The final trophy went to Steely and Brad, who had shown the spirit of surf-life-saving –safe comradeship.

Next year they’d compete with the seniors, and together they’d follow the same rules.

Third Place



Pauline
Marshall
of Christchurch

God’s GPS

Two guys, friends from the same school, had just finished Year 13. Exams were out of the way, holidays were ahead and the school leavers’ party was that night. Each had recently passed his restricted driver’s licence and had scored the loan of his dad’s car for getting to the party across town. Strict instructions were given by parents to be sensible, obey the road rules and heed the licence restrictions. These were: no passengers, no alcohol and home by ten.

‘Don’t forget, this is a privilege, we’re trusting you to honour it, blah blah blah.’

Each boy tapped the party address into the GPS of his dad’s car. *Global Positioning System*. Very useful. Like – ‘Continue for 100 metres and take the third exit from the roundabout. Stay in the left lane, then turn left in 50 metres’ – and so on. One boy followed the directions given by the automated voice and arrived at the party venue in about twenty-five minutes. He had a great evening.

The other boy became frustrated with the GPS and each time the voice redirected him he scoffed impatiently and took the route that seemed the quickest. Unfortunately, because of the road works, the dead-ends, and all the u-turns he had to make, he was getting more and more irate, and was often driving way over the speed limit. At high speed he turned rather sharply onto gravel, skidded sideways, knocked over two traffic cones and crashed into a lamppost. He tried to reverse. Nothing. In the end, after several seriously grinding sounds and some loud swearing, he had to phone his dad. That evening involved a tow-truck, the police, forty demerit points and, sadly, no party.

‘What happened to you?’ texted his friend the next day.

‘Um, something came up and I couldn’t get there’.

God’s *Global Positioning System* is fully trustworthy. He knows exactly our position; where we are in life, how we got there and what we’ve been through. Sometimes he lets us get a bit stuck because he wants to help us out of it. He wants to give us direction in life. His son, Jesus Christ, made it possible for this kind of relationship by taking the penalty for our mess-ups when he died on the cross and miraculously rose to life again. We get to know complete forgiveness and experience life to the full. But – and here’s our part – we need to let go of thinking our own way is best and invite him to take charge. Start to trust his GPS. In fact Jesus calls himself ‘the way, the truth and the life’, so he’s really the answer to everything we ever have to face, eh?

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: : Imagine you are one of the soldiers ordered to guard the tomb where the body of Jesus was laid. Write a first-hand account of your experience including the aftermath. (400 words maximum)

General Comments

This assignment required a thorough reading of the historical account concerning the experience of the soldiers ordered to guard the tomb where the body of Jesus laid, as recorded in the gospel of Matthew.

As the entrants were asked to give an account of the resurrection event from the point of view of one of the soldiers present, the story needed to be told in the first person voice. The main character is therefore referred to as ‘I’ as opposed to the third person voice where the pronoun ‘he’, ‘she’, or ‘it’ can be used.

Writing in the first person has the advantage of conveying to the reader personal observations, insights, reactions, thoughts, and the emotions of the character. The reader gets the impression they are inside the character’s head and they are getting a direct account of the event from a primary source. This can create an intimate and close connection between the character and the reader.

The disadvantage of using the first person voice is the fact that the writer is limited to portraying the event from the viewpoint of one person only and this may be biased or misleading.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the key to the Christian faith and starting with these guards and the authorities of the time, countless attempts have been made down through the ages to discredit it and cover up the indisputable evidence that God raised Jesus from the dead and that he's alive today!

In judging the competition, I looked for the following:

Factual accuracy. The story of the soldiers guarding the tomb is found only in Matthew's gospel. While it doesn't tell us everything, I expected the details in the entries to match the account recorded in Scripture.

The language used needed to convey the shock and terror the soldier experienced. This was a cataclysmic event comprising an earthquake, a dazzling mighty angel, and a dead body miraculously coming alive again. Short, sharp sentences and evocative language were therefore appropriate.

I wanted to sense a close connection with the guard as he recounts his experience – just as though he is talking directly to me.

A good conclusion is required even if the outcome for the guards is inconclusive.

I awarded first place to Shirley Jamieson because I felt she covered the above points best. By giving the characters real names, she makes the account more realistic and personal.

Caroline Cook received second place and Jean Shewan was third.

I must say I was disappointed to find inaccurate details in some of the entries, and even the omission of important features such as the earthquake, the angel, and the bribery attempts in the aftermath.

All the entries were well-written and a pleasure to read.

First Place



Shirley
Jamieson
of Featherston

Justus and Mercy

'But it's not true!'

I was still shaken from what had happened, and it takes a lot to rattle a Roman soldier.

'People must accept this explanation of events, Justus,' the Jewish chief priest repeated, offering a large bribe to me and the other three soldiers. 'Jesus' disciples stole his body from the tomb while you soldiers slept.'

'Roman soldiers do not sleep on guard duty.'

Septimus, one of the other soldiers turned on me. ‘Well, do you want the alternative, Justus?’ his voice was raised in anger. ‘You know as well as I do that any soldier on guard duty who lets a prisoner escape – or in our case a dead body – is executed.’ He glared at me. ‘Do you want us to die?’

‘No,’ I said, and accepted the money.

‘Excellent,’ another priest said. ‘If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.’

We soldiers left the high priests and headed up the steps from the temple area to our barracks in the Antonia Fortress. My bag of denarii felt heavy in my hand, events of the night cutting sharp in my mind.

The chief priests and pharisees had persuaded Pilate, the Roman governor, that the sealed tomb needed guarding. Rumours circulated the belief Jesus would rise from death after three days.

We had laughed at the idea as we guarded the tomb.

‘Rise?’ Septimus scoffed. ‘That man sure was dead, a physical wreck after what he’d endured....’

Sudden terror froze us into silent immobility.

First, a violent earthquake flattened us, then the unbelievable happened. An angel, shining like lighting, rolled back the huge stone blocking the tomb entrance. He flipped that rock, weighing nearly a ton, right out of its groove, and sat on it.

Another angel joined him, and they entered the tomb.

I crawled on hands and knees, daring to peep in. I could see the angels sitting on the ledge, one at the head and one at the feet where the body

I stared. There was no body. The shroud and head covering lay discarded.

At Jesus’ crucifixion, my Centurion had said, ‘Surely he was the Son of God.’

Now, I believed it. ‘Son of God have mercy on me, a sinner,’ I whispered in awe. I decided right then to seek until I found him.

Jesus had risen from the dead.

It was true.

Second Place



Caroline
Cook
of Auckland

Stunned on Duty

Sweat dripped from my face as we rolled the stone into place. The Roman seal applied on Jesus' tomb, the other guards departed, leaving just two of us to guard against tomb raiders.

As the second dawn unfolded, and two women approached the tomb, the ground around us heaved and lurched. The stone rolled uphill and away from the tomb like a soccer ball. I raced into the tomb to ensure the body was intact after the earthquake. My eyes bulged. There was no body there. How could that be? I ran outside, surveying the ruptured ground for the missing body.

That was the beginning of the most unusual time of my life.

After the earthquake, lightning flashed with blinding brightness, revealing something in white clothes sitting on the stone. The two women were fixated on it. A living being? But what? Who? Fear overwhelmed me and shook me to the ground. I lay stunned. Paralysed.

A gentle voice spoke to the women with authority. "Do not be afraid," it started. As those words were spoken, fear left me. I felt my limbs again. I rose to my feet. The voice continued, then the women ran away. Confusion filled me.

I faced the empty tomb again. Shaking my fists at the sky, I yelled "It's not fair! I do not deserve the death penalty for failure of guard duty."

Despite the passage of time, I was still seething when some chief priests from the city marched towards us.

"We have a large sum of money," one of them said with a wink. "It is yours if you say Jesus' disciples robbed the grave as you slept." Our laughter filled the air. They did not back down. "If the story gets back to the Governor, we will speak on your behalf. Your lives will be spared. Jesus vanishing, is problematic for your people and for us. He was a troublemaker when he was alive. That cannot continue. We must work together. The sum of money we offer will satisfy your many longings."

After slight hesitation, we extended our hands. Our hearts delighted at the weight of the money.

Our story travelled far amongst the Jews. It reached the Governor's ears. His demand to know the identities of the guards at Jesus' tomb, quickly dissipated.

My life was spared by the chief priests that day. So unusual.

Third Place



Jean
Shewan
of
Christchurch

On Guard at the Tomb

“Stay awake! Watch carefully!”

Those were my instructions as I was ordered to guard this tomb. Well, hardly a tomb, just a hole in the rock really, the entrance covered with a big stone it took three men to move. Robbers would be hard put to shift it, let alone quietly. Anyway, why would anyone bother? There was no treasure in there, just the body of a poor man crucified by our soldiers at the demand of the Jews. To my mind, a funny business altogether.

I took up my position as darkness fell, carefully checking out the area before I decided where I needed to patrol. There wasn't a back entrance to the cave and no way any one could dig down from above, so I just had to walk the semicircle around the front, and keep any eye on the side path coming up the hillside. Easy! So, I walked and watched. It was rather eerie, with the sounds of animals scrabbling about, and the odd call of a bird, but nothing out of the ordinary. All night I walked and watched, apart from a brief break every hour or so to eat a few grapes and drink some wine. I only turned away once to answer the call of nature, and nothing seemed to have changed when I came back.

Just before sunrise, as I watched some women carrying linen and spice, approaching the path, I sensed a light shining from behind the stone. A steady golden glow that grew stronger as I turned to look. The stone seemed to be moving on its own! By the time the women reached me, there was a space big enough for a person to walk through. There was no body there!

“They have taken him away. Where have they put him?” The cries of the women brought me back to earth as one of them turned to me, shouting. “Who took him? Where have they laid him?”

I have no answer for them. I've no idea what happened. How am I going to explain to my commander? My career is ruined, my life worthless! Supernatural events don't feature in a Roman soldier's handbook! When I return to camp, I'll just have to tell the commander what I have told you. Hopefully, my punishment will be swift, and the life after death that this Jesus promised will be a reality

Competitions for June 2021

Due by May 1st 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

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: Bible names held great significance for the Jewish people in ancient times and were often prophetic as well. Research the name of an Old or New Testament character and show how the meaning of their name was significant (or, perhaps, not significant) in their life. (300 words maximum)

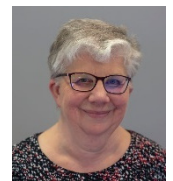


Debbie

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: While sitting in an airport departure lounge, you strike up a conversation with a person you do not know, which results in you being able to share your Christian faith. Using the above scene, produce a short four-minute play suitable for using as a tool for an evangelism seminar or an open-air outreach. (400 words plus stage directions)



Lesley

Email entry to Lesley Edgeler at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: You've inherited a large sum of money from a distant relative. Explain how this came about and what you would do with the money. This can be serious or funny. (300 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.