

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2022

THE CHRISTIAN writer

SEE INSIDE FOR

Tribute to Edith Kathleen Morris

Book Reviews:

Great News Series by Lew Meyer

*Worship Through Novels, Short Stories
and Fairy Tales*, by Regan Kim

Healthy Living by Frank Rigg

How Much is One Person Worth?
by Brian Taylor and Justine Orme

Professional Writing Services,
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 and Membership Secretary: Kathryn Paul: editor@nzchristianwriters.org
For magazine contributions, address changes, membership queries.

Treasurer: For subscriptions, donations: 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/

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.

© Copyright 2022

This issue printed locally by

BookPrint.
Making Bookshop Quality Easy

Contact David at
hello@bookprint.co.nz
09 443 1775
www.bookprint.co.nz

The Christian Writer

Feb – Mar 2022

ISSN 2537-8708 (Online)

VOL 39. No 1

ISSN 1171-0098 (Print)

Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor Membership Secretary Book Review Requests
Page 4	President's Report – Justin St Vincent
Page 5	Editorial: Caught in Suspense – Kathryn Paul
Page 6	Notices
Page 7	Professional Writing Services – Free Advertising for Members
Page 9	The Stage of Life – poem by Rodney Hickman
Page 9	Photography – by Max Carr
Page 10	Book Review: <i>Great News Series</i> by Lew Meyer – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 10	Book Review: <i>Worship Through Novels, Short Stories and Fairy Tales</i> by Regan Kim – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 11	Book Review: <i>Healthy Living</i> by Frank Rigg – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 11	Book Review: <i>How Much is One Person Worth?</i> by Brian Taylor and Justine Orme – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 12	Tribute to Edith Kathleen Morris 1944-2021 – Barbara J Harry
Page 15	Should We Capitalize Deity Pronouns? – Iola Goulton
Page 16	Using Capitals for the Lord – Kathryn Paul
Page 18	Work in Progress – Barbara J Harry
Page 19	Find a Local Writers Group
Page 19	Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 20	Photography – by Max Carr
Page 20	Writing Competitions New Points Board 2022

CW Competitions

Page 21	Level One Results	Page 30	Level Three Results
Page 26	Level Two Results	Page 35	Competitions for April 2022

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



I trust you've had a fantastic start to your 2022. After the disruptive and uncertain times over recent years, I pray and hope that we can all look forward to better times ahead. I'm inspired by the writer of

Hebrews who encourages us to: *Run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* -- Hebrews 12:1-2, NKJV.

Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. What an inspiration! I trust you'll be inspired this year to see what God will do in your life. Could 2022 be the year when you take the next step on your publishing journey? Perhaps this is the year to start on that book idea that has laid seemingly dormant, yet still has a bubbling undercurrent in your heart, mind and spirit. Maybe 2022 is when you dust off that draft manuscript and prepare it for publishing? Like you do, I believe books are a brilliant way to communicate ideas and share stories. Let me encourage you to seek God and His kingdom first. I pray that Jesus leads you as you faithfully follow the call He has placed on your life.



An inspiring way to gain more support through NZ Christian Writers is to connect with other writers in one of our local groups. You'll be surprised by the wealth of experience from people who attend these local groups. If you'd like to find out more about a local group, perhaps even start one in your area, contact our local group coordinator and magazine editor, Kathryn at: editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Our local group leaders are available to help connect you to a community of writers in your area. Our goal for local groups is to encourage and inspire a strong community of Christian writers. Feel free to contact the group leaders listed on page 19 in this magazine to find out more about their next meeting dates, times and locations. More details are also available at: www.nzchristianwriters.org/groups/

Finally, congratulations to this edition's cover photo winner, Max Carr.

Be blessed as you read our latest magazine.

Blessings
Justin St Vincent

Editorial: Caught in Suspense

by Kathryn Paul



One aspect of good writing or a good movie is the ability to keep the reader or viewer in suspense, wondering what might happen next. Usually this is part of what makes the story pleasurable. I find myself wondering about 2022 and what



it will bring us and realise real life in New Zealand has become a bit like a suspense story. Things seem less predictable than they used to be and everyone is trying their best to adjust to change while new unexpected things continue to arise.

I'm not finding the real-life suspense as pleasurable as I do in a book and can see I need to be careful not to allow it to become a source of anxiety or stress. The Lord has reminded me several times lately of 1 Peter 5:7, *Casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully]* (Amplified version). There's so much comfort in God's Word for us.

I'm realising what I need is an attitude adjustment. It's all about my mindset. I love going on mission trips and one of the reasons I love them is the thrill of not knowing what will happen next. Living on the edge and stepping out of my comfort zone to go where the Lord sends me is exciting, fun and often daring. Keeping a good sense of humour along the way is important and helpful.

I've decided what I need to tell myself for 2022 is I'm on a mission trip in New Zealand. I can enjoy living in suspense. I can cast my cares on the Lord, keep my humour intact and not let anything faze me.

I encourage every Christian writer to be daring with their writing goals. Be willing to live on the edge and step out of your comfort zone. Rather than let current circumstances restrict you, let the Lord show you how to turn it around to empower you. The best news for our real-life stories is we all share the main character and because of Him and His Word we know we are promised a happy ending.

With love in Jesus,
Kathryn Paul

I love to hear from our readers! Email: editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Notices

Our 40th Anniversary Retreat!!



Writers Group Leaders Wanted

We need a leader in the North Auckland region due to high membership growth. Please email Justin at president@nzchristianwriters.org or Kathryn at editor@nzchristianwriters.org to find out more details. If there is no group in your area of New Zealand and you are willing to host one, please also get in touch. We'd love to hear from you!

Book Reviews Criteria

Members are welcome to request a book review of 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.

Join the NZ Christian Writers Group on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/newzealandchristianwriters>

Photo Competition 2022

Thank you to members for sending in photographs suitable for the cover of our magazine. We look forward to featuring your work on our magazine covers this year.

Submissions Wanted

More content is needed for our magazines, *The Christian Writer* and *Young Christian Writer*. Send in your poetry, artwork, short stories, articles, cartoons, devotions and anything else you think may be suitable to share. It's great to have a variety of content from our readers. Send it by email to editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Professional Writing Services

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

ASTUTE EDITING

Candice Hume

E: info@astuteediting.co.nz

AUDIOBOOK RECORDING

Make Your Words Come Alive

Former Rhema announcer Rob Holding is offering a special introductory price of \$150 per 10,000 words to turn your written book into audiobook format.

And, so that you can hear for yourself what the end product will sound like, he will provide you a sample of the first chapter for free.

Audiobooks produced to ACX specifications.
Contact:

Rob Holding: 027 450 9421

E: robholdingnz@gmail.com

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

CASTLE PUBLISHING

Christian and Family publishing services in New Zealand.

<http://www.castlepublishing.co.nz/>

CAVIT ENTERPRISES

Proofreading and Copyediting Services

I offer assistance to enable your manuscript to be free of annoying mistakes, repetitions, wordiness, etc, so that it can be sent to a publisher as a 'clean' document.

Most genres considered.

Fees to fit your budget.

Brian Cavit Dip Edit

E: cavitent@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN EDITING

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

I hold a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in marketing and have over 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

DAYSTAR BOOKS

Christian Publishing Services

Do You Want Help With Your Manuscript?

- What to do with it. (Free assessment available.)
- How to get it published.
- Where to find an editor.
- Help with self-publishing.
- Tips on writing.
- Ideas for publicising your book.

The one-stop shop of the DayStar team of consultants, authors, editors, graphic artists...are keen to help you.

We specialise in non-fiction but will also look at other genres and make appropriate referrals.

Ask for our brochure and discussion about any aspect of your manuscript:

E: Info@daystarbooks.org Check our website www.daystarbooks.org

WORDWYZE PUBLISHING

Assisting Authors to Self-Publish

Services Offered:

- Professional Proofreading & Copy Editing
- Interior Layout and Design
- Cover Design
- E-book Conversion
- Upload to POD services for Global Distribution
- Local Print Preparation
- Photography and old photo retouching

Colleen Kaluza:

E: colleen@wordwyze.nz

Visit <http://wordwyze.nz>

WILD SIDE 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 and download the free guide to self-publishing.

Ray Curle: 09 439 5717

E: ray@thewildside.net

WRITING & EDITING SERVICES

As a career journalist and book editor, I've spent a lifetime working with words.

I spent 13 years in secular media working for the Northern Advocate, NZ Women's Weekly, NZ Herald, and then in London as a feature writer for *Woman* at IPC magazines.

After that I specialised in writing for Christian publications, namely *Daystar* magazine, *Challenge Weekly* and I was editor of *Christian Life* news-magazine.

I've edited books on a variety of topics, including missions, biographies, fiction, travel, poetry, music and theology.

My goal is to help writers on the road to publishing and make their words sparkle and shine.

Marie Anticich (027) 660-9933

E: marieanticich@gmail.com

WRITING ANSWERS

I have over 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

The Stage of Life

by Rodney Hickman

The audience is seated, the lights turned
low

The curtain about to rise on this new show

The cast excited, some are nervous a bit

They planned and worked hard, hope this
show's a hit

There is always a lead singer, actor or star

The rest of the cast look up to so far

Life is a lot like the theatre, I reckon

We all play a part, the spotlight to beckon

For there's a director, a manager, who
knows the whole game

Knows all the parts, knows us all by name

My part might be backstage, not noticed at
all

But I still take a bow at that last curtain call.

Photography by Max Carr

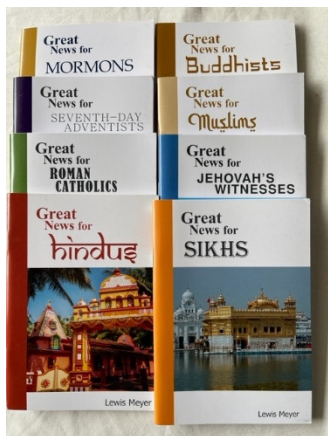


*"Now when these
things begin to take
place, straighten up..*

*..and raise your heads, because
your redemption is drawing near."*..

Luke 21:28 ESV





Great News Series

By Lew Meyer

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Life Quest Resources 2021

Full-time Christian worker, apologist and writer Lew Meyer has completed this series of eight little booklets entitled: Great News for Hindus, for Sikhs, Buddhists, Muslims, Roman Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, and Seventh-Day Adventists.

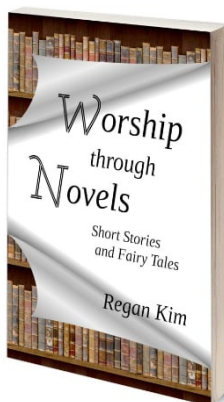
In each case he has thoroughly researched the history and beliefs of each of the religions or faiths in an objective manner and gently and succinctly points out the differences between their beliefs and those of true followers of Jesus Christ and the God of the Bible.

Lew explains: 'History proves there are two great dangers in this world. One is no belief in God, the other is a distorted belief in God. This is why a true understanding of the character of God is important.'

He has written these booklets with the dual purpose of helping Christians to understand the background and teachings of different religious groups, and for passing on to anyone in these groups, or to someone who is considering joining one.

The booklets are available individually or as a set at www.lifequestresources.co.nz

Other booklets available by the author: *When Life's a Mess. What Killed Evolution? Which Faith is True?*



Worship Through Novels, Short Stories and Fairy Tales

By Regan Kim

Review by Julia Martin

Co-published by WordWyze Publishing Ltd 2021

Born in Korea, Regan came to New Zealand in 2001 where he's involved in writing as a novelist, essayist and blogger.

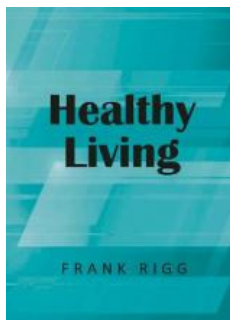
In this intriguing small book, he examines several well-known works of literature, including novels such as Uncle Tom's Cabin, short stories, and even a fairy tale – Aladdin and The Wonderful Lamp.

In each example, he gives a brief outline of the story including relevant and memorable quotations from the text. The author then draws biblical lessons applicable to the Christian life from the characters, dialogues, events and plots. These are filtered through his biblical world view of life and he quotes scripture to back up his reasoning.

Regan writes: 'When you read a novel with a biblical perspective, even a non-Christian story, you can find Jesus hidden in the fictional story.'

This he claims can help build up our spiritual life and can lead to the kind of worship God desires from us.

I believe he's right. If we, as Christians, truly have the mind of Christ (2 Corinthians 2:16), then we will see life in all its forms – good and bad – from His perspective.



Healthy Living

By Frank Rigg

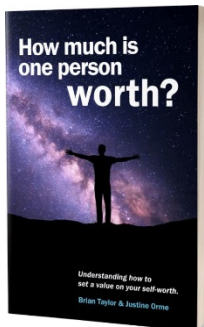
Review by Julia Martin

Published by DayStar
Books 2021

In 2017, Frank Rigg published his book entitled *Wholeness Unlimited*.

Now at age 96, he has written this short and succinct follow-up booklet to emphasize his belief in the wellness and wholeness of our body, soul and spirit that comes only from a right relationship with God our Creator.

Frank must be one of our oldest active members. Well done, Frank. You are an inspiration to us all.



How Much is One Person Worth?

By Brian Taylor & Justine Orme

Review by Julia Martin

Published by WildSide
Publishing 2021, Acorns to
Oak Trees

There are many big questions in life, but in this book the authors focus on the question, 'How much is one person worth?'

Most people would answer in terms of their financial success, or the possessions they have accumulated, their status, accomplishments, or how others view them. But deep down inside, we perceive something is missing if our self-image and self-worth are based on the wrong things, and this leaves us unfulfilled and dissatisfied with life.

Rather than write a self-help manual, the authors have devised a real-life series of weekly seminars which the reader can attend, along with a typical couple named Marie and Adam. On the surface they appear successful, but inside there is emptiness and disillusionment.

The lecturer challenges the attendees each week with searching questions that force them to face reality and to discover the basis of their self-worth and self-image, because both are foundational to a full and successful life.

Ultimately the couple discover that the answer lies with God – their Maker. Once they are reconciled to Him, they experience inner peace and joy, with a purpose for living.

The second part of the book follows their journey of discipleship as they attend a Bible study each week where their faith is nurtured and they grow spiritually.

The writers state: 'The purpose of this book is to provide answers for people who want to blossom, to flourish as whole people.' I recommend it to anyone who has this desire.

Tribute to Edith Kathleen Morris, 1944-2021

by Barbara J Harry

I met Edith in 2009 when she facilitated the NZ Christian Writer's (NZCW) Hamilton group. Her creative writing and enthusiasm encouraged me to pursue my God-given talent.

Jan Pendergrast recalls, "I remember Edith as a daily attendant at the Summer retreat at Narrows, 2010. I don't think Edith was a member for very long as her work with Disabilities was her priority. She wasn't a member in 2014, so I suspect she joined around 2009/10 and resigned at the end of 2011."



Edith speaking at the NZCW Summer retreat at Narrows, 2010

Many people have called Edith their friend. Edith and I had some precious times as she reminisced and processed memories from her childhood.



The eldest of five, Edith Graham was born in Sydney, Australia during the war. Edith and her teenage mother Joyce lived with extended family while her father Lawrence was serving in the RAAF in New Guinea. But at age six months Edith went from a bouncing baby to a rag doll. The polio caused a major weakening of both legs, requiring intensive therapy. Edith's family soon relocated to New Zealand for Edith's rehabilitation.

At 18 months Edith was 'institutionalised in paradise', as many of the residents later described the Wilson Home in Takapuna. Edith, home in time to start school in Portland, strengthened her legs by riding a tricycle.

In 1959 Auckland hosted the Billy Graham Crusade. Here is Edith's account: "I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus as a teenager at that crusade. I had never been anywhere with so many people, and I began to feel a panic within me. I had managed to climb the stairs on my crutches and braces, but that was before it was dark and the crowds pressed around me. What if something happened? I wouldn't be able to get out! The preacher? Why was he speaking directly to me? He was saying Jesus loved me, came to save me. I was lost without Jesus in my heart. Could it be true? I knew what it was to be lost, worthless, and of no value.

“The song... just for ME, pulled me out of my seat. I tucked my crutches under my arms and stood on my wobbly legs. Without thinking how I could get down the steps, or what would happen if I lost my friends in the crowd, I was suddenly down in front of the platform, crying and joining in with the hundreds of others, repeating the prayer of salvation.”

Edith, at the encouragement of the Crippled Children's Society (CCS) field officer, completed the commercial course at Seddon Memorial Technical College in Auckland. Noel and Edith met through Ham Radio in 1963. The pair settled in Grey Lynn after their wedding in Whangarei. The following year in Otara, Lynda was born. Edith was very innovative in the mothering role, even proving to doctors that a 'disabled' mother could manage a normal baby!

Later, in Hamilton, Philip was born but survived only nine months. This was devastating for Edith and began one of the darkest times of her life, and in their relationship. In the middle of this, Noel cried, “If you are real, God, HELP!” His conversion began to bring them both together to find God's purpose and leading.

1972 found them as students at Faith Bible College, preparing for 25 years ministry in Japan. Their involvement began in Youth With a Mission (YWAM), but Edith soon spread her wings pioneering Women's Aglow in many cities across Japan and advocating for Japanese people with disabilities.

Returning to Hamilton, in 1999, Edith was determined to not be the 'token disabled person' on any team. Many Disability awareness groups benefited from Edith's vision, enthusiasm, education and fund-raising. In 2008 Edith was elected

National President of Polio NZ (then Post-Polio Support Society) and for six years she guided the Society into a new era of lobbying and advocating. For three years, Edith hosted a Community Radio's weekly half-hour slot.

Edith and I had mutual connections through my work involvement at Life Unlimited, a disability support organization, and attending Harvest City Church. Here, Edith found a new freedom by 'dancing' in her wheelchair and worshipping with a banner.

Edith's health deterioration during the past few years heightened her love for her Saviour. Husband Noel affirms, “I want to pay tribute to the lady who has been alongside me and has been my support for over 57 years. She has been the love of my life. This is the girl that doctors said should never get married and should get a mundane factory job. No, this is the girl who followed her heart, followed the Lord Jesus, and went out and made a difference to the world she lived in.”



NZCW retreat at Bible College, Gordonton in 2011; Edith at the rear.

Dream Running

by Edith K Morris

Sometimes I'm forced to bed in the afternoon
I hear children laugh and squeal from my sunlit room
I long to be with them,
to be part of their mayhem.

Sometimes I'm in bed early before dark
I hear a dog barking as it runs in the twilight park
I long to feel the sun's last ray
but energy was spent too soon today.

Sometimes I wake in the quiet of a long night
I'm running without irons, my body so light
I twirl and swirl again and again,
in my dreams no more pain.

Sometimes in a glimpse of heaven I see my small friends
I don't go to bed in the middle of the day, or at day's end;
Together we run and play in delight,
where there is no end to His sunlight.

© 2008 Edith K Morris
re-edited in Feb 2016

Printed in *Oh Light* an anthology of writings and reflections to enrich the Spirit. Published by *Disability, Spirituality and Faith Network Aotearoa/New Zealand Inc.*

Who's got the Disability? Edith, one ready to listen and encourage, only saw her Ability through God's enabling power. Now Edith will be dancing full-swing with her Bridegroom-King!

Thanks to Noel, and Jan Pendergrast for their contribution to this tribute.

Should we Capitalise Deity Pronouns?

by Iola Goulton

Deity pronouns are pronouns such as He, His, Him, and Your used to refer to God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

Do we capitalise deity pronouns? The original Scriptures provide no guidance because neither Hebrew nor Greek distinguishes between lowercase and capital letters. And despite popular belief, we don't capitalise as a way to show respect or honour. If that was the rule, we wouldn't capitalise satan.

So whether we capitalise or not depends on the style guide we follow.

What is a style guide?

Most publishers have a style guide: a set of rules governing how to treat editing questions including spelling, grammar, punctuation and word usage.

Editors follow the guidelines of the appropriate style guide in editing or proofreading a manuscript. They also create a style sheet explaining the spelling or treatment of words specific to that manuscript to ensure consistency.

Common Style Guides

The *Chicago Manual of Style* is one of the two most commonly used style guides in the USA (the other is *Associated Press*). CMOS is typically used for fiction and AP is used in journalism. CMOS 8.95 says:

Pronouns referring to God or Jesus are not capitalized unless a particular author or publisher prefers otherwise.

The New Oxford Style Manual is one of the major UK style manuals. NOSM says (p97):

Use lower case for pronouns referring to God where the reference is clear, unless the author specifies otherwise.

The Style Manual is the official style manual of the Australian government. Some New Zealand publishers also use it as it's newer than the *NZ Style Guide* (published in 1995). ASM says (p127):

In the past, the capital letter assigned to God was often extended to the attendant pronouns ... but this is now less common.



Zondervan (publishers of the *New International Version* of the Bible) recognize that the major style guides don't address many of the style issues raised by those writing for a Christian audience, so they published their own style guide, *The Christian Writer's Manual of Style*. Many Christian publishers use CWMS, either alone or in conjunction with another style guide. CWMS says (p145):

Most publishers, religious and general, use the lowercase style ... to conform to the two most popular versions of the Bible (the bestselling New International Version and the historically dominant King James Version).

CWMS does say:

[Capitalizing] gives a book, at best, a dated, Victorian feel, and at worst, an aura of irrelevance to modern readers.

CWMS points out that capitalisation can be confusing for younger readers (who were never taught that deity pronouns should be capitalised), and that using capitals could imply emphasis where none was intended.

Summary

While the major style guides prefer that personal pronouns referring to God are not capitalised, they do say the decision is up to the publisher. The most important factor is consistency: use he or He, but not both.

(NZCW Editor's comment: Please note some of the content in this article is peoples' opinions. It's important to consider the professional and valuable points Iola brings here from her work experience as a professional editor. I have a different perspective from my experience which I share in the next article. For competition entries, please check with the judge if you're unsure what's required.)

Using Capitals for the Lord

by Kathryn Paul

We are told the original Bible scriptures didn't make use of capital letters and they also didn't use punctuation. These are things we use in our modern language as tools to help make reading comprehension easier.

Using a capital letter doesn't distinguish honour in our written communication *except* in pronouns representing the Lord. In general a capital letter makes it clearer to the reader it is the name of a place, person, or the start of a sentence. Therefore, Las Vegas, Jesus Christ and Satan are all capitalised in this sentence and none has been given noticeably greater honour than any other.

The main point to remember is your written work is your own and as the author of it you have the right to choose whether to use capital letters in pronoun references to the Lord.

A style guide is a valuable tool available to serve us, to help get our piece of writing to the best standard we can, to serve the reader the best way we can. We don't always have to agree with everything a style guide recommends and style guides differ in certain rules from publisher to publisher and culture to culture.

Here is an example of using a deity pronoun in an excerpt from my children's novel, *Dog Tucker*, published by Scholastic who are a publishing house with offices around the world:

Slowly, a heaviness lifted off Devlin's body and he felt hot all over. He opened his eyes and stared upwards... at the ceiling of a hospital room. He turned his head and stared at Allan. The man had his head bowed. His lips were still murmuring in quiet prayer.

When Devlin opened his mouth to speak, he found he was hoarse and could barely make a sound. He pushed himself harder. "You can stop bothering Him now," he croaked out.

A name for God isn't used at all in this scenario and capitalising the word *Him* helps make it clearer Devlin is referring to whoever Allan is praying to. This book is not targeted at a Christian audience so it's true that some young readers won't notice the capital at all, some may think it's a typing error, but some will notice and be curious about it. They may wonder, who is this person Allan is praying to? Why is this person given the honour of a capital *H* in *Him* when no one else on the planet gets that? Earlier in the story it is indicated Allan is a Christian, so that's a clue for the reader as to who he is praying to.

If I write, *I love Jesus Christ and He is my Lord and Saviour, but Satan, he is my enemy*. I have honoured Jesus Christ with my capital in *He* and made it clear Satan does not receive the same treatment. Personally, I do enjoy using capitalisation for deity pronouns for the Lord. I encourage every writer to be true to their own convictions and reasons for why they will or won't use capitalisation in their text.

Either way, as I already mentioned in the informative article previous to this one, your decision must be kept consistent within that specific piece of work. Otherwise it will be untidy and confusing for the reader. Your goal is for the reader to have a smooth ride rather than a bumpy one and to easily understand what you're saying. If it's helpful to capitalise a deity pronoun then do it; if it's unhelpful then don't. There is often more than one perspective to consider and the final decision is yours.



**How do our giant problems
measure up to God's power?**

Courtesy of freechristianillustrations.com

Work in Progress

by Barbara J Harry

I had a burning passion to be a fireman but ... it got extinguished.
Chef-hand? It grated on me.
I left housekeeping; I got swept off my feet.
Stable-hand? The assistant wouldn't muck-in!
Thought about tailoring...However, I couldn't cotton-on, let alone make a cut out of it!
Upholstering was a big cover up.
I wasn't on the cutting edge with hairdressing and window cleaning was a pane.
Didn't stay cobbling; couldn't outshine my colleagues.
Nor with the dairy factory, 'cause I got cheesed off.
Shearing? My mates pulled the wool over my eyes.
Driving a digger? I got entrenched in other things.
Got on the wrong track with train driving and as a pilot there was a lack of head space in the clouds.
Thought about being an arborist but kept going out on a limb; branching out!
Log truck driving? Couldn't log-on efficiently.
Plumbing was very draining.
Building? Bit slow nailing it on the head.
Radio technician? Was on the wrong wavelength.
An electrician? Got my wires crossed – it was powerful and sparked controversy!
Jeweller? Wasn't cut out to be so precise.
Nor as a surgeon – it was challenging operating with such a blunt supervisor.
I couldn't make up the overtime in Watchmaking.
Didn't stay with Dentistry – I couldn't get my teeth into it.
Optometry? I lacked super-vision and lost sight of my goal – what an embarrassing spectacle!
Computer programming ended up in a tangled web.
Inland Revenue administration was very taxing.
The Insurance boss couldn't ensure I'd still have my job – so I didn't claim it.
Bookkeeping? Well, that didn't add up.
I tried architecture but missed the foundational training.
Rugby? I got a kick start but put my foot in it BIG time.
Gave up possum trapping: got out by the skin of my teeth!
Fishing? I had this sinking feeling I was hooked...
Tried acting but the curtain-raiser caused a scene and the confectionery boss tried to sweet-talk me.
I'm still working on a job hunt.
Think I'll make a note about writing – every word counts!

Join a Writers Group

AUCKLAND, ELLERSLIE

Sara McGuire
sara.mcguire81@gmail.com

AUCKLAND SOUTH

David Moore
Mob: (027) 481 9996
david@crossroadscounselling.co.nz

CHRISTCHURCH

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

HAWKES BAY

Debbie McDermott
Tel: (027) 769 2321
deborahmcdee@gmail.com

NORTHLAND

Kathryn Paul
editor@nzchristianwriters.org

PALMERSTON NORTH

Rodney Hickman
Mob: (022) 676 3640
rodneyhickmanpoet@gmail.com

TAURANGA

Ruth Linton
Mob: (021) 408 661
ruthlinton2015@gmail.com

WAIKATO

Colleen Kaluza
colleen@wordwyze.nz

WELLINGTON

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

Connect with a community of writers in your area. Contact these leaders to find out more.

WELCOME New and Returning Members:

Claudia Wiesner

Blenheim

Ruth Caukwell

Christchurch

Daniel Cook

Tauranga

Sue Shelton

Hastings

Gemma Parsons Duncan

Auckland West

Taylor Foster

Tauranga

Janette Barclay

Tauranga

Jonathan Rumens

Christchurch

Karan Allen

Rotorua

Naomi Greene

Hamilton

P L Jenkins

Warkworth

Ray Lewis

Auckland East

Rosemary Carey

Hastings

All NZCW members are invited to share a Writer Profile and Book Feature(s) on our website.

For details email our NZCW president, Justin St Vincent:

president@nzchristianwriters.org



Photography by Max Carr

Writing Competitions New Points Board 2022

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, the 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**. These are now awarded as Manna Christian Store e-vouchers via email. Our next prize-winners will be published in the June-July 2022 magazine edition.

All new members begin on Level One. 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. Entrants receive constructive feedback via email from the judge.

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Sue Shelton	15	Ruth Jamieson	15	Jean Crane	15
Clive McKegg	12	Pam Driver	12	Heather Vincent	12
Lauren Allan	9	Ricolene Gounden	9	Janet Fleming	9
				Jean Shewan	9

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Research and write an essay on the topic of 'The Pen is Mightier than the Sword' from the Christian viewpoint. Provide a bibliography of Scripture references and other sources to support your argument. Do not include the bibliography in the essay's word count. (400 words)

General Comments

I was pleased to receive six well-written, informative and interesting entries to this competition and congratulate entrants for giving it a go. A fair amount of research needed to be undertaken to support the thesis statement of 'The Pen is Mightier than the Sword' and most of the entrants rose to this challenge by obtaining relevant information from the Bible as well as from other sources such as Encyclopaedia Britannica and online articles. Researching and gleaning data from more than one source is important as it adds credibility and is more likely to convince your reader that the point you are making is valid.

While not specifically stated in the competition requirements, the prime objective of the assignment was to persuade the reader to accept the point of view that 'The Pen is Mightier Than the Sword' using selected research evidence. Only the first of the four types of essays (listed below and taken from Time4writing.com) could effectively achieve this:

- 1. **Persuasive Essays:** Convince Me. While like the expository essay (see N° 2 below) in its presentation of facts, the goal of the persuasive essay is to convince the reader to accept the writer's point of view or recommendation.*
- 2. **Expository Essays:** Just the Facts. The expository essay is an informative piece of writing that presents a balanced analysis of a topic.*
- 3. **Narrative Essays:** Telling a Story. In a narrative essay, the writer tells a story about a real-life experience.*
- 4. **Descriptive Essays:** A cousin of the narrative essay, a descriptive essay paints a picture with words.*

The bibliographies provided by entrants were, for the most part, excellent. However, do ensure full URL links to online sources are included in your bibliography, so that this information can be easily accessed and checked or cross-referenced by the reader. Also, when quoting directly from the Bible, it is important to not only mention what version of the Bible you are using in the bibliography, but to also include its full copyright details, usually located on the Bible's flyleaf.

First Place



Sue
Shelton
of Hastings,
Hawkes Bay

The Power of Words

“The pen is mightier than the sword” is a figure of speech expressing the idea that the ability of words to influence or persuade is more powerful than using brute force. In this essay I will offer arguments to support this statement, and suggest that from a Christian perspective this statement is even more valid.

The term was originally coined by playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton¹ back in 1839 when fewer people were literate than they are today². The pen is likely to have greater influence today when millions have access to books, newspapers and the Internet.

Submitting the pen to the power of God adds an extra dimension to its impact. John Wauck³, when discussing the influence of Thomas Moore and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, points out that the words of these men were able to transform people’s lives. Their witness to a Higher Power was more influential than the politics of their day. Danyun tells of the sustaining power of scripture in the testimonies of persecuted Chinese Christians, uplifted and strengthened by the word of God, even while suffering tremendous persecution⁴.

My own personal experience provides another example. As a young girl I learnt many bible stories. In my mid-thirties I made a commitment to follow the Lord Jesus and received the Holy Spirit into my life. Immediately a most extraordinary thing happened. The words of scripture, that I had read from a young age, suddenly became alive and meaningful to me in a way that filled me with awe and excitement. I experienced the truth of Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...”⁵. This resulted in a transformation of many of my habitual ways of thinking and acting.

The bible is full of teaching about the power of words. The book of Proverbs gives examples of how words have the ability to encourage or crush⁶. In the book of John, Jesus himself is referred to as “the Word”⁷, and represents everything that God wants to communicate to man.

In conclusion, although a natural sword may achieve a certain end through force or fear, it is the pen that can change people’s lives on a deeper level. This is especially true of the Word of God, described by John as “the sword of the Spirit”⁸. It can transform lives in a way that is lasting and deeply profound.

Bibliography

1. E Bulwer-Lytton (1839) *Richelieu: or, The conspiracy : A Play, in Five Acts. To Which are added, Historical Odes on The last days of Elizabeth; Cromwell's dream; The death of Nelson by the Author of the "Lady of Lyon", "Eugene Aram" & c. (1 ed.). London: Saunders and Otley, Conduit Street. 1839. p. 39*
2. <https://ourworldindata.org/literacy>
3. John Wauck (2020) Mightier than the sword: the power of Thomas More and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Church, Communication and Culture*, 5:2, 248-262
4. Danyun (1991) *Lilies Amongst Thorns*, Sovereign World, Tonbridge, England
5. Hebrews 4:12a New King James Version
6. Proverbs 11:8, 15:1, 15:4, 16:24, 18:4, 18:20 New King James Version
7. John 1:1 New King James Version
8. Ephesians 6:17b New King James Version

Second Place



Clive
McKegg
of Whangarei

Sword or Pen?

In an 1839 play by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, the protagonist, Cardinal Richelieu, discovers a plot against his king. Richelieu wants to defend him, but as a priest he is denied use of the sword. In a moment of revelation, he exclaims: *"The pen is mightier than the sword... Take away the sword; States can be saved without it!"*

We like to use power to right perceived wrongs. Walter Wink calls this *"the myth of redemptive violence"*. From Babylonian creation stories to super-hero blockbusters the narrative is the same: violence, swords and guns win.

Peter takes this super-hero role when at a dark moment he defends Jesus, slashing at the ear of a servant. Jesus intervenes: *'Put your sword back in its place, for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.'* (Matt 26:52)

John Lennox comments that: *"...using swords, or any other physical force, to defend Jesus and his kingdom has the effect of cutting off ears, one way or another: violence remains one of the main reasons why many people will not listen to Christ's message."* (Lennox, 38)

Jesus reveals a better way through His redemptive suffering and words of forgiveness toward His enemies. These actions slice through the ancient violence narrative, making way for light to break through into the hearts of those he forgives, making His followers: *'...a letter of Christ...written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.'* (2 Cor 3:2-3)

We His followers are then sent out with timely words, spoken or written in love and humility under the Spirit's leading. These can indeed have the power to pierce hearts, not to wound, but with the expert precision of a surgeon. Everything can change with one word from God. *'For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.'* (Heb 4:12)

Bulwer-Lytton also invented the famous first line *"It was a dark and stormy night"*. How easy to slip into fear and reactivity as we live in increasingly dark and stormy times. It helps to remember that our King is not under threat. We don't need to be sword-wielding super-heroes, just pens being guided by the Spirit.

Bibliography

Gee, Alison. *Who first said 'The pen is mightier than the sword'?*

<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30729480>

Lennox, John. *Against the Flow: The inspiration of Daniel in an age of relativism*. Oxford, SPCK Publishing, 2015.

Wink, Walter. *The Myth of Redemptive Violence*.

<https://www2.goshen.edu/~joannab/women/wink99.pdf>

Scripture taken from the New American Standard Bible. Copyright © 1960,1962,1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Third Place



Lauren
Allan
of Taupo

The Pen or the Sword?

Apostle John wrote in the Bible's New Testament "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1 NKJV). In 1839, Playwright and Novelist Edward Bulwer-Lytton first wrote that "The pen is mightier than the sword". He suggested the expression of a word was more effective in getting your point across than violence (Gee, 2015). Since God's word comes through the pen via messenger then surely the pen's more powerful?

The Bible is made up of a collection of 66 books and is commonly referred to as the Word of God. It is believed that perhaps it's first book was written about 3400 years ago (Ratner, 2016). Longevity is a wonderful example of the power of the pen. Millions of people around the world read these books in a variety of Bibles being guided and supported by the 'Word' to this day.

Luke was an Apostle of Jesus Christ and he is the author of the Book of Acts including the third gospel in the Bible. His penmanship provides humanity with detailed examples and accounts of Jesus' teaching and influential life from beginning to end (Strauss, 2017). Two thousand years later we can read and learn about Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension which have fundamental importance in the life of today's Christian.

Paul, formerly known as Saul of Tarsus, also became an Apostle although he was not initially of the first twelve. While he was imprisoned in Rome he wrote several epistles. He used the power of God's words on paper to share messages with the community which still provide advice today. He wrote instructions on how Christians were to live it through the use of humility, unity, freedom and ethics. Paul proclaimed the lordship of Jesus Christ and salvation for anyone who had faith (Petruzzello, n.d).

In conclusion, the pen is mightier than the sword. Ever since the pen became a tool to share God's mighty word it has been used to positively impact and shape the lives of those who lived before us, presently and I believe infinitely. "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12 NKJV).

Bibliography

Bible. (2021, December 14). Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved December 14, 2021, from <https://en.wikipedia.com>

Books of the Bible. (2018, March 19). Dictionary.Com. Retrieved December 14, 2021, from <https://dictionary.com>

Gee, A. (2015, January 9). *Who first said 'The pen is mightier than the sword'?* Bbc.Com. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from <https://bbc.com>

Gospel of Luke. (2021, December 3). Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved December 15, 2021, from <https://en.wikipedia.com>

Hebrews. (2021). King James Bible Online. Retrieved December 21, 2021, from <https://kingjamesbibleonline.org>

Paul the Apostle. (2021, December 17). Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved December 18, 2021, from <https://en.wikipedia.org>

Petruzzello, M. (n.d.). *St. Paul's Contributions to the New Testament*. Britannica.Com. Retrieved December 15, 2021, from <https://britannica.com>

Ratner, P. (2016, September 25). *How Old Is The Bible?* Big Think. Retrieved December 14, 2021, from <https://bigthink.com>

Strauss, M. L. (2017). *Luke: The Gospel of the Savior for Lost People Everywhere*. Bibleproject.Com. Retrieved December 15, 2021, from <https://bibleproject.com>

Who wrote the Bible? (n.d.). Bibleinfo.Com. Retrieved December 14, 2021, from <https://bibleinfo.com>

Level Two

Judge: Ruth Linton

Requirement: Write a simple read-aloud children's story about a king or prophet in the Old Testament. Aim for pre-schooler age; e.g. 3-5. Children this age can understand far more than they can read, so words do not need to be for a young reader but should still be clearly understood. (200-300 words)

General Comments

I was thrilled to receive six well-written entries for this competition. (This would also have thrilled Janice, our late judge and is a testimony to her enthusiasm and encouragement.)

I was looking for lively writing with everyday applications relevant and simple enough for young children to understand. The story of many Bible characters span several Bible chapters and are the source of much challenging and encouraging theological teaching. However, for young children it is important that the main concept be simple and easily applied to a child's life. For this reason, and because of the limited word count, one main application was all that was needed rather than a sermonette.

Creating a suitable atmosphere by using appropriate words and figures of speech help reinforce the message. Repetition of important words and phrases, alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia are all great ways of emphasising the message of the story and are ways children enjoy. Two entrants also used verse which children appreciate. However, for young children easy rhymes and strong, even rhythm are essential. (Remember Dr Seuss!). Ruth Jamieson was particularly successful here with her entry on God speaking to the boy Samuel.

Too much background information was a problem with some entries. Although such information can help capture a child's interest and understanding, the word count did not allow for much of this.

It was also important to let the story speak for itself rather than suddenly introducing the concept of Jesus or God in the 'punch line'. I was pleased to see all the writers make a determined effort to convey concepts such as sin and national disobedience in a way easy for a child to understand.

Overall grammar and spelling were good. One interesting spelling error was 'focusing' spelled with a double 's'. Normal spelling rules for English plurals must be abandoned here as 'cuss' is a word for swearing! According to the NZ Oxford Dictionary a single 's' is all that is required and the plural of 'focus' is 'focuses' or 'foci'.

Most entries adhered to the expected 'layout' guidelines. I have sympathy for those who struggle with computer technicalities but do ask for help if you are struggling in this area. I have to look for assistance from time to time but not doing so makes the magazine editor's job unnecessarily difficult.

Congratulations to the writers who were awarded a place in this competition. I look forward to more entries from you all in future competitions.

First Place



Ruth
Jamieson
of Whakatane

God Speaks to a Young Boy

“Samuel, Samuel,” a voice called in the darkness,
Young Samuel awoke and sat up in his bed
Wondering if that voice was all in his head,
Or was it old Eli in the room next door
Samuel mused as his bare feet hit the cold floor.
“Eli, Eli, wake up, wake up.
I’m sure you called and it was not in my head.”
“No son, I didn’t call you, go back to bed.”
Samuel lay down and was almost asleep
Tossing and turning and dreaming of sheep,
“Samuel, Samuel,” that voice called yet again.
Young Samuel stirred and sat up in his bed
Wondering again if it was in his head,
It must be old Eli, he thought as before
His bare feet pit pattered on the cold stone floor.
“Eli, Eli, wake up, wake up.
I’m sure you called and it was not in my head.”
“No son, I didn’t call you, go back to bed.”
Samuel lay down and was almost asleep
Tossing and turning and dreaming of sheep.
“Samuel, Samuel,” came that voice yet again.
Young Samuel awoke and sat up in his bed
Thinking that maybe the voice WAS in his head.

No, Eli must be calling out once more
His little bare feet froze on the cold stone floor.
“Eli, Eli, wake up, wake up.
Three times you have called and it’s not in my head.”
“It must be God calling you son, go back to bed.”
Samuel lay down, listening for that call
Amazed that God would talk to him at all,
Ready to speak what He asked him to say
As God’s prophet for the rest of his days.

Second Place



Pam
Driver
of Auckland
South

Deborah Sings

Many years ago, before Jesus was born, God’s people in Israel struggled with letting their good God lead them. Instead they learned bad ways and ended up doing bad things. Then they got into bad trouble. God could not help them because they would not listen to Him. When things got very bad God’s people would cry out to Him. Then He would send a leader to rescue them. You would think that once God helped them, His people would never leave Him again, but once things were put right, God’s people would often forget and stop following Him again. This went on time after time.

One of the leaders God sent was the prophetess Deborah. At the time Deborah lived, God’s people had been conquered by cruel King Jabin, the King of Canaan. King Jabin had a huge army with nine hundred iron chariots. He was mean and God’s people were very frightened. They cried out to God for help.

But Deborah wasn’t frightened. She knew God was very good and wanted to help His people, if they will only listen to what He said. God told Deborah it was time to rescue His people. She called Israel to battle and this time they listened. Because Deborah believed God would help, He did. Cruel King Jabin and his many iron chariots could not stand against Israel’s great God in heaven. King Jabin quickly scuttled home. God’s people were free.

Deborah was so happy she burst into a song of praise to God. “Hear kings. Listen rulers. To the Lord I will sing. I will sing praise to the Lord, the God of Israel.” (Judges 5:3 NASB) For forty years the people of Israel continued to follow God and they had peace. All because Deborah believed God and obeyed.

Third Place



Ricolene
Gounden
of Auckland

The Unlikely King

There was once a wicked king named Saul. God was not happy with him and sent his servant Samuel to choose a new king. Samuel got to Jesse's house and began to meet his sons one by one. Eliab was tall and handsome. Samuel thought he could be the next king.

“No, not him, said God. I do not look at what's on the outside of a person, I look at the heart.”

Next came Abinadab and Shammah but they were not God's choice either. Jesse showed Samuel seven of his sons but, God did not choose any of them to be king.

“Are all your sons here?” asked Samuel.

“My youngest son is out tending to the sheep.” said Jesse.

Samuel urged Jesse to send for his son. No one took their seats until he arrived.

David was handsome but untidy looking, he did not look like the next king of Israel.

But, as soon as Samuel saw him, God said “This is my choice, David will be king.”

God's Holy Spirit filled David; God was pleased.

It was fifteen years before David became king. He went through many troubles, sadness, and heartache.

But through it all, God was with him.

God was with him even when he made mistakes and wrong choices. He always asked God for forgiveness and God was happy with him again. David was the apple of God's eye and God loved him very much.

This is the story of the unlikely king.

This is our reminder that God looks at our hearts.

What is on the inside is more important than what is on the outside. A heart that loves Jesus is the most beautiful and precious of them all.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: Choose a Bible verse and, using a lesson from nature, turn it into a devotional. This may include poetry. (250 words)

General Comments

This month's competition is straightforward and also a useful one because from time to time many of us are asked to prepare a short devotion in written or spoken form.

Jesus was the master storyteller and often used examples from nature or everyday activities the ordinary people were familiar with to illustrate his point or teach a spiritual truth to those whose hearts and minds were open to receive it.

These stories were called parables and many are recorded in the gospels.

In writing this short devotion – like many of our writing projects – we need to focus on our audience.

Is this devotional destined for a secular or church setting?

The answer to this question will determine the language we use and the depth of the spiritual application. If scripture is included, keep it short and in a modern translation. The use of poetry or a suitable quotation can finish off a devotional effectively.

In our amazing world there are countless examples from nature all around us on which we can base our thoughts and from which we can draw spiritual lessons and applications. I'm pleased to see the variety of topics the entrants chose including oysters, compost, pollution, seeds and plants.

I was pleased to receive seven well-written devotionals which made judging difficult.

In making my decision, I looked for a simple, straightforward example from nature that would be understood by a mixed audience. The opening needed to catch my attention and the thoughts and application flow smoothly throughout the devotion with a final message that would stay with me for some time.

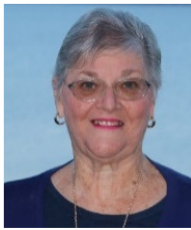
Some entries included poetry and one was a complete poem, all well written and appropriate.

I awarded first place to Jean Crane. Her devotion is based on a local, relatively recent event familiar to most of us. It is interesting, educational, and has a powerful spiritual application.

Second place goes to Heather Vincent for her devotional written in verse. While the content would probably not be understood by non-believers, it has a powerful message for Christians and is beautifully expressed.

I awarded third place equal to Janet Fleming and Jean Shewan. I hope all contestants will get the chance to use their devotionals somewhere.

First Place



Jean
Crane
of Tauranga

Ocean of Life

There is the ocean, large and wide, where countless creatures live, large and small alike and where ships sail. (Psalm 104:25)

On the 5th October 2011, the container ship *Rena*, grounded on Astrolabe Reef while approaching Tauranga Harbour. The oil spill caused New Zealand's worst maritime environmental disaster. A five kilometre oil slick washed up on Mount Maunganui beach threatening marine life, the ecosystem, the food source of 20,000 birds, and the death of about 2,000 seabirds. Wildlife teams worked relentlessly to save the spotted dotterel, little blue penguins and twenty-five other native birds species. The oil spill also had an impact on the lives of the Motiti Island residents, as their drinking water and kai moana (seafood) were contaminated and could not be consumed.

In the beginning, God created an awesome world where everything was perfect. But our environment is becoming increasingly polluted. The sinking of the *Rena* was a disaster that was plainly seen, but there is an unseen plastic rubbish disaster taking place every day in the ocean, harming thousands of sea creatures.

Psalm 104:25 says, 'There is the ocean, large and wide, where countless creatures live, large and small alike and where ships sail.'

This unseen pollution reminds us of hidden sin that can enter our lives. The contamination of sin can have a devastating impact on our spiritual life, and eventually harm us by damaging the relationship we have with Jesus.

Don't let the ocean of your life be polluted by sin.



Second Place



Heather
Vincent
of Tauranga

The Story of the Seed that Died

John 12:24 Jesus said, Except a grain of wheat falls into the ground, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies it produces many seeds. By its death it will produce many new kernels, a plentiful harvest of new lives. 1 Corinth 15:36 What you sow does not come to life till it dies.

*Just a single grain of wheat, basking in the sun
Felt his life was good, and his days were fun.
This is the life for me he thought
I can do what I please, not what I ought.
Then the farmer came and took him away.
This is the end, he was heard to say
Down, down, down, the wheat seed went, Into the soil below,
It was dark and dirty, cold and damp, But the seed began to grow.
Was this the end of the fragile wheat?
Or were there more seeds for man to eat?
This small seed had died it seemed, and left no fruit.
But wait - from that dead seed there grew a root
Down through the dirt, down through the clay
Down where the water and nutrients lay.
Another shoot pushed upwards to the sun,
Reaching for warmth and the rain to come.
The green leaves soon gave way to gold
And the wheat seed head grew sixty-fold.
The seed is dead but its fruit remains.
Just like us when we give Him our plans.
I need to die that I might live
And bring forth fruit for Him
As Jesus did upon the cross
In dying for my sin.*

Third Place Equal



Janet Fleming
of Kaao

An Oyster's Pain

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. Psalm 147:3

Often when separating oysters, an oyster will become damaged. With time the shell may repair but the chip will still be noticeable.

Oysters growing in a confined area may become misshapen.

Other oysters may become bitter due to what they have been feeding on,

Most people are aware that oysters produce pearls. That piece of grit which aggravates the oyster, can with time be turned into something of beauty and value.

All around us there are people who fit into these categories. There are those who are broken by what life has dealt them. For some, the wounds have healed but the scars remain. Others have become twisted and bent out of shape. A third group become bitter due to what they have suffered, or what they feed their minds.

Finally, there are those who have come to the One who heals the broken-hearted. Two women stand out to me in this category. They took the pain they suffered and, like the oyster, producing a pearl they turned their tragedy into something of beauty. Will you trust Jesus and let His healing bring beauty to your life?

*A glowing pearl would never be
So beautiful for one to see,
Had not an oyster known the pain
Caused by the piercing of sand's grain.*

*As scented leaves upon a tree
When crushed will smell more fragrantly;
So may the hurts I bear today
In future bless another's way.*

Third Place Equal



Jean Shewan
of Christchurch

Do Not Worry

'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil or spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed as one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith?'

Matthew 6: 28-30 NRSV

The visiting preacher mounted the pulpit and placed a plain vase containing one flower on the edge by the microphone. Immediately there was a muttering and twittering among the elderly ladies, stalwarts of tradition. One was even heard to exclaim with horror. "He used props in Church!"

At the time it was amusing, but now I realise how often the message from God is obscured by our own ideas, prejudices and distractions. These verses have so many beautiful images for us to expand for the enrichment of our Christian walk, yet we fall at the first hurdle. How often do we stop and spend time looking at, feeling and listening to the beauty of God's creation? Is it time to give thanks for the generosity of God, who has done all the work for us to enjoy? But often we are blinded by the 'things' in our lives, so that we miss the daily miracles God works in our lives. We worry about the future instead of living in the knowledge that God is always with us, and provides all that we need.

Maybe this would be a good time to set aside the concerns and worries that we have and look more closely at the beauty of the lilies.

In the words of the song:-

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
look full into his wonderful face,
and the things of the world will grow strangely dim
in the light of his glory and grace.

Competitions for April 2022

Due by March 1st 2022

EMAIL ENTRY AS AN ATTACHMENT, COMPLETE WITH WORD COUNT AND YOUR NAME.

Font: Arial, 10 pt **Heading:** Bold Title Case, 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 which 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: John 13 describes how Jesus washed the feet of the twelve disciples during the Last Supper. Study this passage of Scripture, then write an article on what the foot washing means and how you think it is relevant to us today. A bibliography is not required but you may include one if you wish. (450 words, excluding the bibliography if one is included.)



Debbie

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write a 20-30 line poem about a place or theme of nature that is meaningful to you – then write a haiku poem summarising the longer poem. Both versions of your poem should be included in your entry.



Ruth

Email entry to Ruth Linton at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: 'Covid 19 has changed the world.' Write an opinion piece for the newspaper giving your viewpoint on the subject, including a subtle spiritual message. (400 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.