

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2021

# THE CHRISTIAN Writer

## SEE INSIDE FOR

*Tauranga Writers Retreat 2021*  
Report by Ruth Linton

*Grace and Mercy*  
Poetry and Photography by Max Carr

### Book Reviews:

*Leap-Frogging for God* by Dorothy Finlay

*Is Marriage for Me?* by June Dooney

*The Invisible Sentence* by Verna McFelin  
and  
*Mary and Me* by Robyn Cotton

Waikato Writers, You are not Alone!

New South Auckland Writers Group

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](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org)

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

For magazine contributions, address changes, membership queries.

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### **Book Review Requests:** (current members only)

Mail a copy of your book to our Book Reviewer, Julia Martin

286 Karapiro Road, RD4, Cambridge 3496 or email: [reviews@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:reviews@nzchristianwriters.org)

**The Christian Writer** is our bimonthly magazine published by NZ Christian Writers and distributed to all members. Contributions from members are always welcome. If you have some advice, encouragement, or an announcement of an event of interest to members, do send it to the editor for consideration by the 10th of the month before the next publication date. Submissions should be emailed as a word document attachment and be no more than 500 words long, except at the discretion of the editor.

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

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## Website:

Our vibrant, user-friendly website is full of interesting information, such as details of seminars and copies of past magazines. It also gives each individual member an online presence. We encourage all members to reach out to other Christian writers. Feel free to share our website link with them so they can join us. As a member you are the best advocate for growing our collective of NZ Christian Writers.

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

# President's Report



We are delighted to share with you this October-November 2021 edition of *The Christian Writer*. A massive thank you to all our members who have chosen to renew their membership

with us this year. Can I just encourage you to reach out to one other person who you feel may be interested in joining us? As our collective grows, we can reach more people with our encouraging, insightful and inspiring magazine. Even during these challenging times, we find that many new members are joining us to be encouraged and part of something significant.

Here at NZ Christian Writers we are on a mission to connect Christian Writers in New Zealand. We foster community through our local groups, magazine, retreats, seminars and website. To join, a friend or family member can easily fill in our online membership form here: [www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/)

I also want to share a massive congratulations to this magazine edition's photography competition winner, Max Carr. I recently asked Max about his stunning photography. Max shared: "The Owheroa Falls are a beautiful 'fan type' shape at the southern end of the Karangahake Gorge ... one of my favourite photographic sites and is worth an outing for a day including exploring tunnels, finding old railway relics and visiting the nearby Victoria Battery once used in the extraction of Gold." Max enjoys pairing beautiful photography with God's Word. Psalm 42:7, NKJV, says: *Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me.*

In other news, NZ Christian Writers still has a vacancy for a new treasurer to join us. Ideally, we would welcome a retired accountant who is knowledgeable with accountancy software Xero. If you feel God is calling you to help serve in this capacity, do feel free to reach out to me for more details: [president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org)

NZ Christian Writers is currently in a season of positive growth and we've seen up to three new members a week joining us during the lockdown season. It's so encouraging to see new members discovering us and seeing value in how we can help them on their publishing and writing journey.

We trust you enjoy reading our magazine. Be blessed during this new season.

Blessings  
Justin St Vincent



# Editorial: Spread Hope Not Germs

by Kathryn Paul



I'm hoping and praying by the time this magazine issue reaches you the delta outbreak will have been stomped out and we will happily be about our daily lives. As I'm writing this, New Zealand is in level four lockdown.

Many writers appreciate an opportunity for isolation to get on with the writing they've been wanting to do. Still, lockdown doesn't seem the same to me as voluntary isolation for writing. A voluntary retreat to write sounds exciting, but a forced lockdown reminds me of the importance of being with people. We write for God and for people. We need both in our lives to live a truly abundant life.

My personal mission statement is to, 'Love God, love people and take as many people into God's Kingdom with me as possible'. It becomes tricky to love others from a distance. Fortunately, us creative types are often full of ideas for ways to get around or over obstacles. I'm contemplating going out and reading an inspirational poem aloud on the footpath. Really, would I get arrested for doing such a thing? As long as I keep my distance and I'm spreading hope and not germs, I think creative entertainment should be acceptable. (*Hmmm... maybe I should try it in the supermarket queue... but how will I tell if my poem is making people frown or smile? Perhaps that's a good thing...*)

I enjoy trying to 'think outside the box' to spread the Lord's message of hope. The creative and unique often gets people's attention. I encourage you to ask the Lord to help you step out of your comfort zone and take a risk with your writing. I'm not saying do something illegal, just do something different that stretches your thinking and grabs your reader, listener, or viewer, whoever it may be. It's a proven fact that sharing the love of Jesus Christ can save lives. He is our rescuer. I wouldn't be alive today if this wasn't the truth. The world offered me no hope. Christ offered and gave me everything. Let's keep pressing on and spread hope!

With love in Jesus,

Kathryn Paul



*I love to hear from our readers! Email: [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)*

# Notices

## 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](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org) or Kathryn at [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org) to find out more details.

## 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.

## Canterbury Branch Seminar for Christian Writers

**Seminar Topic:** *Writing, Publishing, Promotion.*

**Facilitator:** George Bryant, QSM, JP, MA (Hons), Dip Theol, DipEd, DipTchg, AFNZIM, ATCL

**Venue:** Empower Church, 140-146 Springfield Road, St Albans, Christchurch

**Date:** 16th October. **Time** 9am – 2pm. **Cost:** FREE. (Koha donation welcomed.)

There is plenty of parking onsite. User-friendly (no writing required, only note-taking.) All welcome! To view the event poster visit our website here:

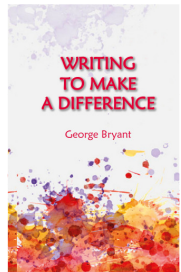
<https://www.nzchristianwriters.org/christchurch-retreat-for-christian-writers-with-george-bryant-qsm/>

**To Register:** contact George: [bryantgw@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bryantgw@xtra.co.nz) or 027 314 6690.

## Writing to Make a Difference by George Bryant

Have you received your free booklet, *Writing to Make a Difference*, by George Bryant? If not please contact George at [bryantgw@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bryantgw@xtra.co.nz) to request a free copy.

George has kindly made complimentary copies available for subscribers to *The Christian Writer* magazine.



## Have you heard of the Australasian Religious Press Association?

ARPA has a membership of 82 publications and 22 individuals as well as 64 staff members of the publications—168 members in total. Its aims are to develop members' skills, knowledge and professionalism; to offer opportunities for networking, fellowship and information-sharing among members; and to recognise excellence through the presentation of annual awards.

The Australasian Religious Press Association awards celebrate excellence in writing; design and creativity; and publishing. The awards are given for work published during the preceding calendar year.

The awards presentation was held recently online. If you would like to learn more and view the full list of winners and judges' comments, please visit their website to download the booklet: <https://www.arpa.news/awards2021>



## TAURANGA WRITERS RETREAT 2021

by Ruth Linton

Full of anticipation we arrived at Jan and Hans Pendergrast's home on their rural property at Oropi, about half an hour's drive from Tauranga's CBD, for the weekend 9-11 July. Several were able to stay overnight and others joined us during the day on Saturday and Sunday. (And, of course, Ruth's dog, Rocky, came too to entertain Jan's dog, Matty. Hmmm!) The weather was fine, the view magnificent and the house was warmed by snuggly fires matched only by the warmth of fellowship among those who attended.

Ruth set the tone on Saturday morning with a devotion based on our need to know who we are and our purpose for living. We spread throughout the house (and the spacious library) working on our personal projects including planning sequels to earlier books, revising an earlier biography and writing up recent devotional revelations. George Bryant and former member, Catherine Hudson, gave their time to answer questions and give pointers on planning future volumes to those requesting it. Brian, the husband of one of our members, spent time with Hans on the farm. Writing was not his interest but learning farming skills and erecting fences was.

As usual, the dogs provided entertainment though somewhat noisy at times. Ruth, a fitness enthusiast, walked her dog twice daily. Matty, the official resident canine came too, often leading the way. All went well the first time. Not so the second. Hearing the neighbours chatter waft invitingly across the paddock, Matty just had to investigate. No amount of calling and attempts at whistling seduced him to return. An ashamed Ruth returned with only one dog and Jan went in the dark by car to rescue Matty from the kennel where he had been locked up since his arrival. Ha, ha!



*Matty the dog with his pal, George the cat.*



*Rocky*

Next morning, they walked again keeping well away from the neighbours. This time a local pig hunter drove in. Matty raced ahead to greet the hunter's ute and refused to 'sit and stay' as instructed. That was the last Ruth saw of him. No yelp of pain, no bump and no blood indicated there had not been a misadventure. But where was Matty? Safely at home having followed the vehicle, Ruth discovered on her return some 30 minutes later! Well, would you try again? Sunday afternoon, avoiding the neighbours and tramping around the paddock rather than down the road Ruth 'doggedly' persisted. The two dogs had a marvellous walk (should I say, run) chasing rabbit and possum trails around the edge of the bush. Keeping Rocky on a long lead gave Ruth a sore arm but it ensured the two dogs stayed out of trouble and all enjoyed the exercise.

For many, the highlight of the weekend was our Sunday service. Although from several church backgrounds we had an awesome time of worship followed by Jan's message on Hope and Ruth's thoughts on communion—from an eternal perspective. We shared communion and prayed for one another. It was a rich time of God's presence with us.

Over all, the retreat was a wonderful time of writing and fellowship, and we are eagerly considering another retreat in the Spring. We recommend other groups plan to have a retreat in their own area.



# DEVOTIONS – Tauranga Retreat 2021

by Ruth Linton

Like all ‘good writers’ I read books – well at least sometimes! Actually, not nearly enough. However, recently I was given a book called *First Love*, written by Geoff Woodcock. It is a remarkable book and I’d like to share some thoughts from it with you. The writing style is simple, not full of deep and pretentious theology, but conveying a simple profound message.

The first chapter called *Revelation to Reality* sets the stage. Everyday theology is not enough to keep us walking with God in these difficult days. Woodcock challenges us with the need for genuine reality in our faith walk and the key is not a seminary full of theology but a personal revelation from God himself. As He explains: **revelation** is not about God teaching us something new <sup>(1)</sup> but about God making something real for us.

How we think shapes our experience of life and forms our world view. In the natural this process of forming our world view begins in our childhood, even when we are very young children. Sadly, most of us develop a view of life that is less than perfect, one that includes hurts and disappointments and false, unattainable expectations. In the finish ... *as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.*<sup>(2)</sup> It is no wonder Jesus tells us we must become as little children to be able to enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>(3)</sup>

All of us have sensed a desire, even a call to write. This may have developed because of rich life experiences that we sense should be shared with others. For some there is a therapeutic value in sharing their hurts in the hope of encouraging others to find healing and future in a life committed to following Christ. And, of course for many, it is the desire to educate or entertain others. All are legitimate goals.

Whatever is our goal for writing Woodcock gives three challenges. These challenges don’t only apply to our writing. They determine how we live; how successful we are in any sphere.

- a. 2 CORINTHIANS 10:12. *But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.*

Be yourself. Don’t compare yourself with others. You are not inferior—just different.

- b. ROMANS 12:2. *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Make sure your values and goals are God’s. Sometimes your views will be accepted by others and sometimes they won’t. God’s ways are always higher than ours and always produce the best result. And they have the greatest impact on others. Be wise in how you demonstrate your values, but don’t hide them.

- c. GENESIS 1:27 -28. *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it...”*

Take the time to ask God these two questions:

- i. Why did You create me? The answer to this is your purpose, the reason you are here.
- ii. Who am I? This is your identity.

Only when we know why God created us will we be able to look into the mirror and see who we really are. Only then can we write our best.

Notes:

- (1) Page 3 First Love by Geoff Woodcock
- (2) Proverbs 23:7a
- (3) Matthew 18:2-4

## How to Plot a Book – The W Plot

Sent in by Ruth Linton



## The W Plot

Image created by & for [TheHowToWriteShop.com](http://TheHowToWriteShop.com)

The 'W' method is a visual way to outline the main plot points of a story. You can use a whiteboard, a large piece of paper stuck to a wall, a pinboard or whatever works for you. You can write down and up the strokes of the 'W' using a whiteboard marker or pencil; something you can erase and rewrite. Post it notes are a great idea because you can move them around or small coloured paper squares that you can pin to the pin board.

The W shape helps to take the story in an increasingly downward direction followed by a temporary improvement culminating in a false victory or defeat. The story then takes another more serious turn for the worst to a point where all seems lost but then something happens to motivate the main character (protagonist) to get up and fight to achieve the required outcome. In some stories they achieve that, but some authors choose not to.

### How to use The W Plot

- **Trigger Event** – (same as the Inciting Incident in a number of other plotting methods.) It is when something happens that puts the protagonist on the main journey of the book/story. In The W Plot this is followed by *Setting up the Problem* that the protagonist will need to solve.
- **1st Turning Point** – A turning point, in general, is an event (scene) that changes the protagonist's (or story's) direction which occurs at the end of a period of falling action. The protagonist starts out all fired up, having seemingly identified the problem. She thinks she has a direction to go but then something happens that changes where she thought she was going or how she thought she was going to get there. With a revised plan in hand, she goes back to the path and attempts to recover and resolve the situation, but the big overall problem cannot have been solved at this point otherwise it was not 'the big overall problem'!
- **2nd Triggering Event** – (Midpoint in several other plotting methods) At this point some new question is raised or some new event happens that sends the protagonist in a completely new direction. This event is big. The protagonist may even discover a new goal here.) This is followed by a deepening of the problem. She has this new goal or new way she has to use to hit the original goal... things get rough.
- **2nd Turning Point** – (Dark Moment in other plotting methods) This is the emotional low of the story. All is lost. There is no way that your character (or hopefully the reader) can see for her to reach her goal. But she must... or at least try to. This is followed by the *Resolving of the Problem* where she rises up to fight and faces down the antagonist.
- **Resolution** – (or Denouement) All is well, or not. The battle is over and your protagonist has either won the fight or lost. We see the world as it is now/after the journey.

*Edited by J Balmer from:*

<http://howtowriteshop.loridevoti.com/2018/05/how-to-plot-a-book-the-w-plot/>

# Professional Writing Services

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## 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

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## CHRISTIAN EDITING

My name is Lola 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.

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## WRITING ANSWERS

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

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

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

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

### Janette Busch

E: [WritingAnswers1@gmail.com](mailto:WritingAnswers1@gmail.com)  
or [Janette.Busch@gmail.com](mailto:Janette.Busch@gmail.com)

## 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](mailto:marieanticich@gmail.com)

## Grace and Mercy: poetry and photography by Max Carr

### *Grace and Mercy*



**Grace** is such a wondrous gift,  
It pours from Heaven above,  
It flows unhindered by my sin,  
A gift of boundless love.

**Grace** signifies an open hand,  
Nought does it withhold,  
It has no seeming limit,  
Worth more than reams of gold.



**Mercy** though, is different,  
It is that which is withheld,  
For judgement, which is so deserved,  
On lives which have rebelled -

Was poured upon the soul of Christ,  
When he died upon that cross,  
And **Mercy** intervened for me,  
So I do not suffer loss.

# Devotional: Writing is Leadership

by Chris Dixon

What is Leadership? John Maxwell defined leadership as influence. The Bible says in Habakkuk 2:2 to write the vision and make it plain, so that anyone who reads it can run with it. So if we are compelling writers, able to inspire change, we are leaders. Writing is leadership. So my question is, *What sort of life are we leading people into?*

In this hyper-connected, fast-paced world, nearly everyone is busy. We live in a world that seems to be spinning faster than yesterday. But is that the message of the Gospel? Is that the life Jesus has for us when He said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'? What sort of life did Jesus have in mind?

John 15:5, our work is to abide in Jesus. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus said, 'Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads and I will give you rest.<sup>29</sup> Accept my teachings and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit, and you will find rest for your lives.<sup>30</sup> The burden that I ask you to accept [my yoke] is easy; the load I give you to carry is light.' Reminder: abiding in Jesus is our work.

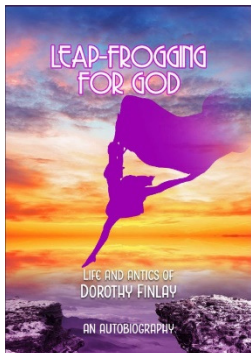
It is completely counter-cultural to have an unhurried and non-anxious presence. It is counter-cultural to be completely present, without notifications on our conversation-makers, and listening to understand, not waiting for a space to say our words. It is counter-cultural to have silence. And yet, in this world that searches for peace in body image, peace in cultural identity, or peace in financial security, true peace can only be found in the presence of God.

A story to illustrate this:

Elijah in 1 Kings 19 is running for his life and ends up in a cave. God knew what he needed in that moment and so, in verse 12, there came something English translations struggle to explain – a quiet, gentle sound, the sound of a gentle whisper, wind, a blowing, a still small voice, or the sound of sheer silence. I have a theory that in that moment of silence in the cave, Elijah was hearing God breathing. God simply chose to sit next to Elijah and be with him.

So when you write, what kind of life are you inviting people into? Are you inviting them into an encounter with Jesus? Are you inviting them into a place of peace and an easy yoke? Because as writers, we are leaders, and they will join us on our journey, wherever that is heading.

Let's help people encounter the presence of God in our words, and in God's presence, find true peace



### **Leap-Frogging For God**

Life and Antics of Dorothy Finlay

By Dorothy Finlay

Review by Julia Martin

Printed by The Copy Press, Nelson, NZ 2020

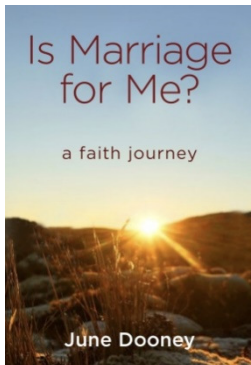
Dorothy struggled with health issues and disability as a child, but when she gave her life to the Lord, she vowed she would do whatever He asked her to do and go wherever He called her to go.

Trained in many aspects of nursing, Dorothy used these skills and others over a period of 32 years in nine Central Asian countries – including Yemen, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Northern Iraq and Israel.

As a single woman travelling, working and living in remote and often dangerous places, she trusted God for guidance and protection, and He never failed her. Wherever Dorothy went she looked for opportunities to share her Christian faith with the local people and medical colleagues, and some became believers.

With openness and occasional humour she describes her experiences, challenges and disappointments in situations and places the faint-hearted would never dare to venture. She writes: 'This book records how God has enabled me to follow His will for my life, and how He has protected and provided for me all along the way.'

While this self-published autobiography would have been improved by professional editing, it's still a story well-worth reading, for it shows what God can do with a servant who is obedient and fully committed to His service. I recommend this book to anyone who has a heart for mission, especially in faraway places we seldom hear about.



### **Is Marriage for Me?**

A Faith Journey

By June Dooney

Review by Julia Martin

Self-Published 2020

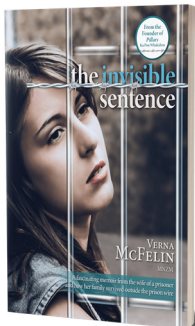
As a teenager, June looked forward to the day when she would meet Mr Right, fall in love and live happily ever after. At age 19 however, she felt God was asking her a question: 'Are you willing never to marry?' This shocked June and the question reverberated through her mind for many years. Was singleness God's will for her life?

On another occasion June received an image of a mountain she was climbing with Jesus at the top. From the other side of the mountain a man was climbing. They met part way and continued climbing together as man and wife. June held onto this image, believing marriage would happen one day, but it was all in God's timing. In the meantime she needed to focus on God's purpose for her life and service.

In this small book, June takes us on her tortuous journey from singleness to eventual marriage and beyond, and I applaud her for her courage and openness in revealing her struggles and challenges along the way. It was a long wait, but God's timing was perfect and at age 49 she married Godfrey and he became her soulmate.

June writes: 'He gave me a promise over 50 years ago that he had a mate for me. Although at times my trust failed, and the fulfilment of that promise seemed impossible, God came through.' Full of wisdom and sound advice, this book will be a help and encouragement to those who are single but desire to be married, and to those who seek to help and counsel them.





### The Invisible Sentence

By Verna McFelin

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Wild Side Publishing 2021

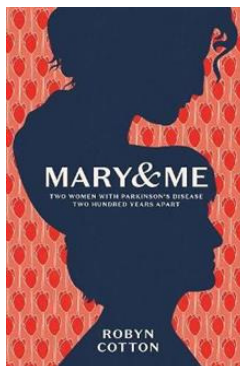
The author's life changed radically the night her husband was arrested for his part in a kidnapping crime back in 1983 in Oamaru. Found guilty and sentenced to 11 years imprisonment, he served seven years in several prisons around New Zealand.

Meanwhile, Verna served what she described as her 'invisible sentence' – struggling to survive alone with four young children on a meagre income, constant relocating to be near her husband for weekly visits, along with the ostracism and stigma of being the family of a prisoner.

With a strong faith in God and the work of the Holy Spirit, Verna describes her spiritual experiences and miracles as God became her guide, comfort and strength. As time passed, Verna discovered other families who were struggling like herself with little or no support. Her concern for their plight, led to the formation of Pillars in 1988 – an organization (now internationally recognized) that supports the children and families of prisoners in New Zealand.

Approximately 23,000 children in NZ have parents behind bars, and Verna claims that these children are nine times more likely to end up in prison. If they are mentored appropriately however, she believes New Zealand's crime rate could be halved in ten years.

This book is an eye-opener and I commend Verna for her openness and honesty in telling her powerful and poignant story.



### Mary and Me

Two Women with Parkinson's Disease Two Hundred Years Apart

By Robyn Cotton

Review by Julia Martin

Published by DayStar Books Ltd 2021

Parkinson's is a neurological disease that affects more than ten million people worldwide. The cause is unknown and there is presently no cure. The author was diagnosed with the disease in 2017 after noticing unusual symptoms from time to time.

Using the pseudonym Rose, she recounts her experience with the disease alongside the story of Mary – a fictitious fellow sufferer who lived in England 200 years ago, when there was no understanding of the disease and those suffering from it were despised and often regarded as demon possessed.

Initially Rose's diagnosis was a shattering blow as she realized her life would drastically change and her future could be bleak. But Rose is a fighter and is determined to prevent Parkinson's from defining her life and robbing her of joy and fulfilment.

Armed with an appropriate diet, an exercise regime, medication and prayer, Rose embarks on a rollercoaster journey from despair to hope. With a renewed, positive outlook she exercises, sails, runs, and even completes an Outward Bound Course.

While the author acknowledges no two cases are the same and that some people suffer more than others, her intention for writing this book is to give hope, courage and positivity, and to encourage sufferers and their families that there is life beyond the diagnosis and it can be a good life!

# Waikato Writers, You Are Not Alone!

by Colleen Kaluza and Eugene Moreau

Writing can be a lonely life. True, great ideas are often birthed in times of solitude and contemplative reflection. In fact, it was Stephen King who said, *“Writing is a lonely job. Having someone who believes in you makes a lot of difference. They don’t have to make speeches. Just believing is usually enough.”*

We believe that writing is a journey of discovery, and the very best discoveries, while they may start out as a solo event, end up being a collaboration of creativity, encouragement and challenge.

Eugene says, *“Sometimes you just need to be inspired, and then there are other times you need help in unlocking a great idea that seems to be stuck. Of course, there will always come a time when, as a writer, you just need someone to encourage and challenge you to bring your writing from a deeper, more authentic place. That’s why I want to be part of a writing group.”*

Colleen says, *“I am excited be a part of birthing the Waikato Christian Writers’ Group! By networking together, we can tap into the knowledge and experience of others in the group.”*

So, Colleen and Eugene have teamed up to lead a writers’ group in the Waikato, and this group promises to be everything and more of what a writer, with a story that simply must be told, gets on the written page.

The Group will meet monthly for 2½ hours and will have five themes over a 10 month period, along with writing exercises and challenges, as well as incredible interactive learning opportunities that will grow your writing, editing and publishing knowledge.

Please contact Colleen Kaluza on email at [Colleen@wordwyze.nz](mailto:Colleen@wordwyze.nz) for more information.

## Wordwyze Publishing – The Story

by Colleen Kaluza

Getting your book from idea to published work, can be a daunting journey, especially if you have no idea where to begin or how to go about it.

Hi, I’m Colleen Kaluza. I run WordWyze Publishing and have been assisting authors to self-publish their work for the past three years.

My love of books goes back a very long way. I remember the first word I learned to read was, ‘the’. I couldn’t wait to get home that day and grabbed every magazine, book or newspaper to spot this word. My excitement at finding it on every page I opened is a feeling of exhilaration I will never forget.

By age nine, I was a firm book addict, causing my mother endless frustration when her calls to me went unheard, as I was lost in a different world!

Fast-forward to 2017 when, after having spent many years parenting and home-educating my children, I realised I needed to reinvent myself. My love of books led me to finding a course in proofreading and copy editing, and in March 2018, I qualified with distinction from the College of Media and Publishing in the UK. My aim was to help Christian authors produce quality work.



Before I knew it, I was not only proofreading and copy editing, but also designing covers, doing the interior layout, e-book conversions and bringing these books to full publication!

It has been amazing to find that all the skills and knowledge I've built up over the years from school until now have been brought together in this new publishing career: my art skills, which were honed at high school; my computer knowledge (I trained as a programmer after leaving school, and have built up many other computer skills over the years); my love of reading, and my knowledge of the English language; photography; and now, finally, my proofreading and editing skills!

God has been amazing at bringing authors across my path, and with each book I've learned something new about Him and something new to do with the business of publishing.

I am incredibly thankful to the first of my authors who trusted me with taking her first book all the way to publishing. Justine Orme has now published three books with my help, and has referred a number of other authors to me, including one in Australia. Most of my work has come through referrals by previous authors or word-of-mouth, with a few from my business card. Each author establishes a relationship with me, which I treasure. I'm thankful to each of them who have helped my business grow, and a few have become repeat authors.

The image of the stack of books is a sample of those I've worked on over the past three years.

WordWyze is now able to offer a full package to authors: proofreading and copy editing, cover design, interior layout, e-book conversion, and uploading the final documents for local printing or POD (print-on-demand) services, to make your book available worldwide.

I look forward to meeting and assisting new authors on their journey to becoming a published author.

Colleen can be reached at  
[colleen@wordwyze.nz](mailto:colleen@wordwyze.nz)



# Join a Writers Group

## AUCKLAND, ELLERSLIE

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

## AUCKLAND SOUTH

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

## CHRISTCHURCH

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

## HAWKES BAY

Jennie Chappell  
Tel: (06) 877 5874  
[heughandienniec@outlook.com](mailto:heughandienniec@outlook.com)

## NORTHLAND

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

## PALMERSTON NORTH

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

## TAURANGA

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

## WAIKATO

Colleen Kaluza  
[colleen@wordwyze.nz](mailto:colleen@wordwyze.nz)

## WELLINGTON

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

## Adam Currey

Auckland South

## Carl Tinnion

Tauranga

## Darren Green

Auckland North

## Emma Parsons

Greta Valley

## Judith Davies

Tauranga

## Kathy Strong

Te Awamutu

## Lisa Harvey-Jack

Whangarei

## Lorraine Dittrich

Dunedin

## Lyndon

## Douglas

Auckland South

## Peter Lawry

Rangiora

## Louise

## Billinghurst

Palmerston North

## Phoebe Adams

Dunedin

## Tess Arches

Auckland West

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



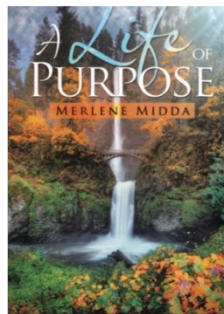
# Writing and Publishing Journey of Merlene Midda



My true Christian journey began in 2006 when I had a revival of faith after many years of living away from God. I then started journaling and continued to do so for the next ten years. At that time in 2016 I had joined a writers group in Australia where I lived on the central Coast of NSW. This group were primarily interested in writing family memoirs.

The thought occurred to me that I had ten years of writing my Christian journey, so why not use that to publish a book? This I did in 2017 calling it *A Life of Purpose*.

A word of caution here... Do not use an American/overseas publisher (as I did) as this resulted in many difficulties that haunt me to this day! The problems with publishing overseas – main points – to self-publish in America there is a problem with times for phoning. Also I was assigned a 'personal consultant' supposed to be in Australia, but turned out to be an offshore consultant from the Phillipines with whom I had difficulty understanding. The overall costs were dearer than if published locally. Also, I was required to apply for an American tax file number once book royalties reached a taxable level. I didn't do that, so any book sales remained with the company. The front cover picture was their choice. It's of Multnomah Falls, Portland, Oregon. USA.



Moving on from there, I moved to New Zealand in 2019 to be closer to family and set to write another book. (I live in the lovely township of Waiuku.) This one, based on my denominational church faith, is titled, *Angel Warnings*. You may find it an enlightening project to do the same; to find out the history of your church faith.

How did I find a New Zealand publisher? I became friendly with a member of my church who writes children's books. Her sister has a publishing business, MTL Investments Ltd. After meeting her, we formed a good working relationship.

My latest book, now in the hands of the printer, is called *Till He Comes*. This is an 'end of the world' look at the last plagues and second coming of Christ as outlined in the book of *Revelation*. This book is still in the printing process in Australia. (It is cheaper to get it done there than here in NZ.) Front cover spelling has been corrected for printing to *Till He Comes*.

These last two books are available as free E downloads if you contact me by email. I do not sell my books, instead, I give them away. This is my form of outreach to others for our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Wishing you all God's blessings and joy in writing for Him.

Merlene.

[merlenemidda@yahoo.com](mailto:merlenemidda@yahoo.com)



# New South Auckland Writers Group

with David Moore

*'There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you'.*

Maya Angelou

## Join the conversation!

**Saturday: November 13/11/2021**

**Time: 1.30-3.00pm**

**Place: Kings Plant Barn**

**163 Airfield Road, Takanini**

**South Auckland**



## Itinerary:

### Welcome. Apologies.

**Devotional:** *Being inspired by our God given diversity, community and creativity can inspire the soul of each writer that: None of us knows as much as all of us together.*

**Introduce yourselves:** Briefly share your interest in writing.

**NZCW guidelines:** Setting up the South Auckland Writers Group thanks to Kathryn Paul: NZCW Magazine Editor and Local Groups Coordinator.

### Discussion:

- What I want from this writers group?
- How can I help achieve these ideals?
- Where to from here?

### Conclusion and closing prayer.

**Please register your attendance with: David Moore**

**Phone: 0274819996 – Office: 095271777**

**Email: [david@crossroadscounselling.co.nz](mailto:david@crossroadscounselling.co.nz)**

## David Moore's Journey

***Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.* Henry Ford**

The inspiration that comes from working with the *commonality of like minds* has always been a crucial learning point in my life where external role-modelling from others has been a catalyst for internal aha moments, change or achievement.

When I became a Christian at age eighteen, I could only read (let alone spell) six words. It was God's compass of human wisdom and kindness that helped me navigate through the debilitating disorder of dyslexia.

It is humbling that 1Timothy 4:12 validates what others valued about me during those early years within a community of Christian faith and practice.

God's compass has also involved helping others reset life's coordinates in a similar way it was modelled to me, including: being a former Salvation Army Officer; thirty years as a counsellor; group and retreat therapist; a Christian EcoQuest initiative; director of a volunteer organization and backcountry life-coaching.

In 2014 my wife (Jean) and I became the first counsellors in New Zealand to receive the Unsung Heroes Award in parliament for our services to marriage and family through the STEPS (Steps To Ending Problem Sexuality) treatment programme. Special thanks to the New Zealand Christian Network.

My radical Christian faith has also been complementary to having a beautiful family including nine grandchildren, a love for tramping in New Zealand's great outdoors, gardening and going scenic in our motorhome.

Initiating a South Auckland writer's group wasn't on the radar while looking for such a group in my neck of the woods, so I am grateful for the opportunity to engage with other writers from NZCW in setting one up.

I am looking forward to seeing what *commonality of like minds* can achieve through connection, encouragement and purpose for each member of the South Auckland NZCW Group. Feel free to join the conversation or make contact before our first meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

### **Blessings and Kind Regards**

**David Moore**

**Counsellor/Author/Retreat and Eco-Therapist**

**CrossRoads Counselling Centre  
Auckland**

**david@crossroadscounselling.co.nz**

**Office: 095271777 - Cell: 0274819996**

**livingandlovingfreely.com**

**retreat4change.com**

**hutreno.org.nz**

**ecoquest.org.nz**



# Our 40th Anniversary Retreat!!



## Writing Competitions Points Board

Points are continuing to climb! 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 Dec 2021-Jan 2022 magazine edition.

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 feedback via email from the judge.

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Christine Platt	24	Ella Hamlin	27	Jean Shewan	51
Max Carr	15	Eion Field	15	Caroline Cook	45
Pam Driver	12	Kathryn Paul	15	Pat Kerr	39
Christine Bovill	12	Felicity Logan	12	Shirley Jamieson	15
Corrine Sinclair	12	Liz Fitzmaurice	9	Keith Willis	15
Mel Cruz Wood	9	Jill Clarke	9	Pauline Marshall	12
Rod Hickman	9			Janet Fleming	12

# Competition Results

## Level One

**Judge: Debbie McDermott**

**Requirement:** Excluding poetry, write about any aspect of nature and the great outdoors in your preferred genre: i.e. fiction, non-fiction, travelogue, devotional, testimony, essay etc. (500 words maximum, 400 words minimum)

### General Comments

*This competition has proved to be very popular. I received nine good entries, five of which were from members who have not entered the competitions before. Congratulations to you all for giving the assignment a go and providing me with some excellent reading matter.*

*Despite entrants being allowed to address the topic in their preferred genre, nearly all nine entries were a combination of a past experience, a testimony and a devotional. This made marking straightforward but deciding on who to award First, Second and Third Place was not easy as each entry was well written, thoughtful and, in a couple of cases, thought provoking. I finally made my decision based on the following criteria:*

- 1. How well were the key requirements of the competition met?*
- 2. Was the story/devotional/testimony engaging and easy for readers to relate to? This is vitally important as the objective of our writing is to impact our readers.*
- 3. How accurate was grammar, punctuation and sentence structure?*
- 4. Was information, description and imagery clearly presented?*
- 5. Did the writer include a strong and memorable takeaway message in their entry?*

*While all entries received were highly commendable, the four entrants to whom I awarded a winning place are those who I feel really excelled in all five of these areas.*

*One of the errors that needs to be addressed in my general comments concerns the inclusion of quotes in some of the entries. When including a quote from someone else's writing, it is important to add the name of the person who wrote the quote in brackets directly after the quote or as a footnote/bibliography.*

*If the person you are quoting from has copyrighted their work, you may even have to obtain their permission to use the quote if permission has not already been given on the flyleaf of their publication. Likewise, when using a Scripture reference, it is important to indicate what version of the Bible you are using. For instance, if you have used the New International Version to quote John 3:16, then the reference should be written as John 3:16 NIV.*



# First Place



Max  
Carr  
of Auckland  
South

## The view from the top

Shards of sunlight burst through the flimsy fabric of our pup tent and promised much that morning. It kept its promise. The uncluttered horizon of a blue canopy of sky lifted our hopes as we set off on the first morning of our five-day adventure on the Rees-Dart Track in the Mount Aspiring National Park.

The brochures informed us that this first day of the tramp would be around 10 kms and take between four to six hours – depending on levels of fitness.

We skirted a large swamp area of a tussock-filled basin and were shaded by a canopy of a beech forest for most of the morning. It was a perfect day. The orchestrated song of the forest bird life and the constant chortle of an accompanying stream added their beauty to our trek through the valley floor.

Our packs were heavy, but our hearts were light. Three of my brothers and I had planned this adventure months ago and had each lived the track in our thought-life for some time. Our imaginings however, paled in the light of the reality as we made our way toward the steep incline to the Rees saddle, some 1,400 m above the valley floor.

We stood at the base of that steep wall of tussock and rock that rose above us; tightened the straps of our packs and started the ascent of the saddle wall. We had to zig-zag our way up the incline and, at times, had to crawl on all fours to negotiate our way forward. We paused from time to time and looked back the way we had come. The views were compelling and bade us keep moving with the promise of even greater vistas from the top of the saddle. We paused at a small tableland almost two-thirds of the way to the top and took in water and crackers as we drew in the frigid air and regained our composure.

We ascended the last few steps and negotiated a small rocky outcrop. That which we had each imagined now proved to be paltry compared to the reality that stretched out like a master's canvas before us. The views were breath-taking. Tree shrouded hills rose up to compete with those still dusted with snow. Cotton ball semi-clouds played hide and seek with the rising sun. The silence was stunning, broken only by gurgling streams and the squawking of forest birds. The orchestra of colours was simply astounding. The pale straw colour of the tussock; the mottled greens of the forest surrounds, the sparkling blue of the canopy above and the sharp white of overnight snow were a gorgeous palette. We each paused to draw breath and then almost spontaneously broke out into that much-loved hymn –

*O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the works Thy hands have made,  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*

We had mastered the first day.



## Second Place Equal



Christine  
Bovill  
of Morrinsville

### A Change of Perspective

Growing up in a family with parents who loved to go for walks in nature cultivated in me a huge appreciation and enjoyment of the outdoors. We would go for walks in the bush exploring God's creation under a giant, green canopy of beautiful native New Zealand trees. Our companions were the Grey Warbler, with its sweet melody filling the air, accompanied by the chatter of playful fantails, flitting from branch to branch beside our path. Stepping across gurgling streams on old, dilapidated bridges brought our imaginations alive as we would describe the trolls living in the shadows beneath these wooden platforms. The scent of the damp leaves and pine needles spread like a shagpile carpet to cover the forest track, contributed to my passion for these strolls out in nature.

On these family outings, we would learn interesting facts or *Bush Basics*. Things such as: where to forage for food or, the best way to create a shelter if we were ever lost. Along with other incredibly helpful but gross concepts such as how to trap, kill, and skin a possum or an eel. Sure, it wasn't for the faint hearted, but it certainly was fascinating and a lot of educational fun for the young and curious.

As a child I would set out on these hikes with energy and enthusiasm running high. I would jog on ahead and attempt to give the family a fright by jumping out from behind trees. In no time at all though, my little legs would tire and I would begin to lag behind the others, disappointed in my inability to keep up.

Dad, an observant and caring man, could tell when I was worn out. Perhaps it was my downcast expression, or maybe it was when I dragged my feet with each weary step. When he knew I couldn't handle it much longer on my own, he would bend down and scoop me up with ease; lifting me onto his shoulders for a ride the rest of the way. I would smile from my lofty perch, able to now rest and enjoy the journey with a much better view of our travels. Here I felt secure and I felt loved.

Are you feeling tired from your journey? Are worries keeping you awake at night and making you feel weary during the day? How about asking your loving heavenly father for a piggy back ride? He sees your weariness, and he knows when you're feeling overwhelmed. Longing to pick you up so that you can rest in his strength, and provide you with a place where you will know a deep sense of security and peace. Rest in the knowledge that you are his cherished child and that his strength will sustain you. Surrender again and enjoy the ride.

Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in Him, for He shields him all day long and the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders. – Deuteronomy 33:12 NIV

## Second Place Equal



Corrine  
Sinclair  
of Silverdale,  
Auckland

### A Heavenly Harvest

Winter has passed and the rain is falling more gently now. Flowers appear on the hillside and new-born lambs are frolicking among the daffodils. A mother deer is leading her fawn to drink beside the quiet flow of a nearby stream. The gentle cooing of doves can be heard echoing through the blossoming cherry trees. Spring is in the air, life is good.

The gardener is busy turning the soil which has been resting, recuperating, and rejuvenating. Time for the soil to wake up and to produce its crops. The garden is hungry, it needs feeding. Since the beginning of time there has been this relationship between the soil and the gardener. The seed is scattered and the gardener waits, waters and watches as the seed begins to grow.

While the gardener sleeps the soil does its work, performing its own miracle. Little seeds start to sprout and tender shoots grow to healthy plants. First the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel within the head. This to the gardener is the mystery. He patiently waits, tending to the needs of the plants as they ripen, producing food for their master and seeds for a new generation. The harvest has come.

Jesus is walking with his disciples beside the Sea of Galilee when a large crowd starts to gather. Seizing the opportunity, he climbs into a boat and pushes it out from the shore. Voices carry well over the water creating a natural sound shell. To his discerning eye Jesus envisions a garden, fertile soil into which he is about to plant his seed. **‘The word of God his Father.’** He is training his disciples in how to care for this garden, which has the potential to grow into a mighty kingdom. **‘The kingdom of God on earth.’** “Open your eyes and look at the fields” he is saying. “They are ripe and ready for harvest. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few, therefore I am sending you out. Go, plant the seed, make disciples of all nations. Remember, I will always be with you.”

Jesus was not speaking of grain, but a **‘crop for eternal life.’** He sees multitudes of hungry people whom the prophet of old called ‘those in the valley of decision.’ (Joel 3:14) This crop is urgent and will take faith. Jesus opens his hand and in it is a mustard seed. “This may be just a small seed,” he says, “but it has inherent within it, the faith to move these mountains.”

Nothing is impossible with God, the Master Gardener. The sovereign Lord who declares, “He who gathers the exiles of Israel, to these I will gather still others, for my salvation is close at hand.” Isa 56: 1

References Used:

Solomon 2: 11 – 12

Mark 4: 26 – 32

John 4: 35 – 38

Matthew 28: 19 – 20

## Third Place



Christine  
Platt  
of Red Beach,  
Auckland

## Mega Magnificence and Mini Marvellousness

*For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God has made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. Romans 1:20*

Even the most jaded soul can be eased by gazing for a few moments at the magnificence of the natural world. The sun filtering through autumn leaves brings depth and richness to their burnished colours coupled with the satisfying crunch of striding through leaves in gumboots. The purple and magenta hue of the sun's goodnight kiss prepares us for the night's restorative sleep and gives hope for a new day tomorrow.

When I'm out walking, I feast on the cloud patterns and the warmth of the sun seeping into my bones. That heat has travelled 150,000,000 kilometres to reach me.

This, for me, is the 'mega' experience of God's all-encompassing hugeness and creativity. This is a God I can worship and to whom I can entrust all my worries and concerns. He is big enough to cope. Nothing will phase a God this huge.

But can he really be bothered with my small problems? Isn't he too busy running the universe to have time to interact with little old me in my tiny corner of the planet? This is where the 'mini' comes in. The God who created the vastness also created the minuteness. Just take any flower and explore its intricacies and depths.

On my dining table where I write I have an orchid given to me by my nieces. At present there are seven snowy white blooms. Their satiny sheen feels soft against my cheek. Each bloom consists of an outer whorl (a circular arrangements of parts) of 3 sepals (like petals), an inner loop of three petals, and a single column in the centre. This column is the reproductive area. The lower one of the inner loop petals is enlarged and is called a lip. This is a convenient landing strip for insect pollinators to alight upon. How thoughtful of God to have provided that.

The inner petals are tinged with ochre at the centre and have a design of fine red dashes. It looks like a careful artist has painted feathery brush strokes in crimson as a contrast to the white and ochre.

I'm reliably informed by the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network that there are 28,000 species in the Orchid family.

The God who has expended all this creative thought and energy on a single flower astonishes me. If I were designing a flower, I probably wouldn't get further than a daisy shape like most preschoolers' first efforts.

Surely nothing is too small for our Creator God's attention. With God the mega and the mini are both extraordinarily awe-inspiring. Some days I need a Mega God and other days I need a God of minute detail.

# Level Two

## Judge: Lesley Edgeler

**Requirement:** Write about a time in your life when you became very aware of the goodness of God. (400 words)

### General Comments

*We all have times in our lives when God's faithfulness has come through. Writing about them can both be difficult and health-enhancing.*

*In a blog, these words from Janet Brighton were quoted: 'Sacred experiences gain validity by being recorded.' (Healthy Spiritual Journaling by Joan Wise.)*

*To write about one's awareness of God's goodness is deeply personal. Your 'heart' will be revealed as you uncover insights, ask questions, clarify and discover recurring themes.*

*Like onion skins, layers will be peeled away or inner walls will collapse. Self-exploration can be scary but can encourage both your spiritual growth and be beneficial to the reader.*

*For this competition topic I looked for three important elements: creativity, clarity and honesty. Through these is the reader able to visualise your experience and relate it to a similar occurrence in his/her life?*

*I awarded Ella Hamlin first place equal. Her heartfelt honesty impacted me emotionally. As her story progressed, God's goodness and love shone through.*

*Kathryn Paul came in first equal. Her writing skills re grammar, spelling and punctuation are an example to us all. God certainly provided her housing needs in many interesting ways.*

*Felicity Logan's writing helped me to visualise how God's provision made an impression on her life. Her catchy title immediately caught my attention.*

*A great hook is necessary for good writing skills. Liz Fitzmaurice's opening sentence relates to all of us. Lockdowns were not a normal part of our daily lives as we grew up.*

*Yet, our words are not in lockdown. We can still write! Experiencing God's goodness gives us a much deeper perspective of life.*

*Our life journeys need to be told so others can be encouraged and inspired.*

*I noticed some spelling inconsistencies. For proofreading, I would suggest printing out your work and circling your mistakes with a pencil before going back to retype. This is much easier than focusing on a screen all of the time.*

*Also watch spacing, especially after commas, colons, em dashes and hyphens.*

*I encourage all contestants to keep writing and entering the competition.*

*Well done everyone.*

# First Place Equal



Ella  
Hamlin  
of Napier

## God's Goodness

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In 2007, the New Zealand government decided, following a five-year survey of young widows, that all widows were to work. Hence, widows support disappeared; they were deemed workforce candidates.

In 2019, at fifty-nine, I became a widow. I had been a pensioner for five years, as my late husband was seventy. We were multi-media publishers, winding down into semi-retirement.

After thirteen months of terminal care and four weeks following my husband's death, I was expected by governing authorities to have my life in order, workwise.

The work-based training course was emotionally painful. Deserted and desperate, I did not want to be in that environment.

"Tell us why you are on this course," they asked.

"I'm a widowed ex-pensioner, without the ability to continue working our business," I managed to report.

Nevertheless, to receive a jobseeker's benefit, I had to attend and participate in their developmental workplace strategies, even with a grieving fifteen-year-old hiding at home, requiring my attention.

My prayer was simple –Jesus, HELP!

An extraordinary sequence of events followed.

Firstly, I was reminded that while my husband was in his terminal state, he spoke emphatically about my need to love and hoped that I would remarry, because a loving relationship made me happy. I was not allowed to object to hearing this from him, as a dying wish.

Secondly, at my hospice grief course, I was encouraged by the facilitator and participants to consider future relationships. I was surprised at the correlation to my late husband's loving lectures. I thought the concept of remarrying odd, though I felt the Lord's Spirit help me comprehend the prospect, when Isaiah 62.4 said: *'No longer will they call you Deserted or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married.'*

I continued to explore work and self-employment options, though the grief drained my energy.

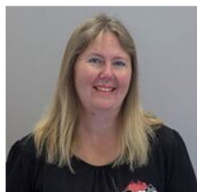
Then, while I was looking after my son's dogs on his orchard, I met his partner's Uncle James.

*'James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ ... This is the pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction ...' (James 1:1,27).*

Ten months later I married James, a widower with a simple prayer.

"Lord, there must be a lady love out there who I could look after."

## First Place Equal



Kathryn  
Paul  
of Northland

## Guess Where I Live Now?

God has shown He is real, listening and loves me. One way He has repeatedly demonstrated this is through providing housing.

I recall I needed to leave a difficult living situation. I prayed about where to go. I sensed God was saying live near my church. I mentioned to someone on the phone I had decided to move to that area. The person I was talking to sounded shocked. Seconds before I rang, as a couple they had been discussing renting out a house. It was exactly where I needed to go.

Prior to my next shift I received a thought impression to ring a previous landlord about a bach. But it was a tiny place. I needed more room. But the impression kept coming that the bach had been made bigger. Finally, I realised it wasn't my thought, but the Lord speaking, so I phoned. The owner sounded astonished, 'I was just about to advertise it. I've made it bigger.'

Another time I was in a downstairs flat at the rear of a two-storey house. It occurred to me I'd be happier on the nearby waterfront with a sea view. I drove along a cliff-top road where I'd lived as a child. The houses looked expensive, but I saw one that appeared plain, like I might be able to cover the rent. I had no idea if it was available, but I prayed for it. I placed an ad for a rental in the local community newsletter describing the stretch of waterfront road I wanted to live on. I received a phone call from a landlord saying they were just about to advertise when they saw my ad. He owned the house I'd prayed for.



Three years ago, I completed my YWAM DTS. I saw a farm property close to the YWAM Base that was way out of my financial reach. I prayed, *Lord, if I return to volunteer-staff and bring my horses, that looks an ideal place for them. I can't make it happen, Lord, but You can. Please do if You think it's a good idea.*

I shelved the thought as I shifted away from the area. Then last year I felt led to step out and apply to volunteer staff at the YWAM Base. Can you guess where my horses and I live now? Every day I feel in awe of the continual goodness of God.

## Second Place



Felicity  
Logan  
of Feilding

## Goodness Follows God-ness

Rain drums on the roof as I settle for sleep and thank God for warmth, safety and security. I mentally list what has come our way: mortgages wiped by parents' legacies; finally obtaining the low-maintenance home desired by seniors; planting out a bare property with what now provides blossoms, mandarins, lemons and our 'stamp' on it all; a sizeable donation to my favourite charity on Mum's passing; an even larger contribution to a daughter's house deposit. We weigh ideas for utilising the balance of our inheritance.

Time after time I thank God for honouring my parents and prospering their business efforts. How did the one-man business they purchased get within years to employ fourteen? As a young adult I marvelled how their honouring of God – known to the community – bore such fruit. My sister's memorial scrapbook after our Dad's death contained a press cutting regarding how a large truck burst into my parents' lounge, and Dad's comments regarding God's protection. Mum marvelled at what Dad had put aside for her (and our) provision, and I reminded her who had been Girl Friday, kept the 'books', chased the details!

During last year's lockdown I entered a short story competition, feeling positive about my chances and imagining what I could do with the prize money. Yes it came my way, and bought a piece of health equipment that is a continuing help and blessing.

Even for my mother's cats there was benefit upon moving in with us, to roam in nature. So what does my husband do upon waking or returning home? -- look for the cats!

As Nahum 1:7 tells us, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who trust in him." There's no single time I became particularly aware -- just many times as I see the freshness of a new day; the show of colour in a garden; hear a friend's greeting; and sense the path of righteousness where he leads.

Over the past twenty years we've been blessed by solid advice and good hunches: done timely maintenance then discovered we had to move house; undertaken study that improved employment; researched health advice that steered us through recent years; found believers of like mind.

Yes times of trial will come, but we can remember the goodnesses as we build the God-ness.

## Third Place



Liz  
Fitzmaurice  
of Lower Hutt

## The Goodness of God in Lockdown

If someone had told us two years ago, that today we would be under government 'stay at home' orders, and only allowed outside our homes if wearing a face covering, we would have laughed, saying 'You've been reading too much dystopian science fiction'. If we had any sense it was true, we might have been filled with fear, wondering what was in store. Even last March, few of us imagined it would be the first of many lockdowns.

Yet, today I notice god in lockdown. He is in my community. I meet him in the generosity of friends who offered to be 'roomies' for the remainder of lockdown had we chosen to stay on when it was announced. He is in the efforts of our builders to restore our house to a liveable state for lockdown, despite minimal notice, and a shop owner who repaired my e- bike over night to allow us to get on the road. God is in our church community who are creating meaningful worship online. He is at work where I notice extra home baked treats appearing at morning tea which more than compensates for the next-door café being closed.

Today I notice god in lockdown. He is in the stillness of the Wellington harbour, with waves gently lapping on the Petone beach. I see him, as small children jump in puddles, squealing with delight and as families kick a ball to one another as they walk along the seaweed strewn sand. I hear the rare sound of tuis trilling. Today they are not drowned out by the untuneful honks of heavy trucks plying the Esplanade.

Today I notice god in lockdown. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. I stand assured, his love never fails and never runs out. I am uncertain when I will next see my new grandson who is already 10% older than when I saw him last. Yet I am certain of God's faithfulness and love. I am uncertain when I will next laugh over a cuppa with friends, but I am certain that I am not alone. I notice god is with me in lockdown, as he has been with me through every joy and challenge previously and as he promises to be with me, no matter what the future holds.

# Level Three

## Judge: Julia Martin

**Requirement:** Write an opinion piece for a local secular newspaper that deals with a current topic. Towards the end bring in a Christian perspective that challenges readers but doesn't preach. (300 words)

### General Comments

*True followers of Jesus Christ are called to be salt and light in this dark world and to take the good news of the gospel to all people. As Christian writers we can use our skills across many media to inspire, challenge and make a difference far and wide in our secular world.*

*In Writing to Make a Difference George Bryant states: 'Writing is a powerful tool for helping change the world around us. It shapes values and human behaviour. It communicates complex thoughts and connects human beings of all ages and generations. It records powerful ideas and preserves precious memories, much more so than the fragility, vagrancies and impermanence of the spoken word and digital media.'*

*While our secular press is relatively free, we have the opportunity at times to use our writing skills to influence and help change the world. To do this effectively these points needed to be considered for this assignment:*

- *Carefully choose a current topic of interest that's in the news at present and research it thoroughly.*
- *The article needs to be your well-informed opinion on the subject filtered through your Christian world view.*
- *As the destination of your opinion piece is a secular newspaper, the language and tone must be appropriate. Avoid Christianese language and jargon which secular readers might not understand.*
- *Weave a subtle Christian perspective into your article that will have the potential to challenge, inspire and influence readers. This element of the article is not easy as it requires a smooth and natural transition from the secular to the spiritual.*
- *Quotations from appropriate scriptures in a modern version and from well-known people can be effective but avoid preaching.*
- *Have an arresting beginning and an ending that challenges the readers and gives them food for thought.*
- *Address issues with well-reasoned statements and arguments. Don't attack people and never use a harsh, angry or sarcastic tone.*

*I awarded first place to Keith Willis for his well-crafted opinion piece which encapsulated my points above. The topic he chose is particularly relevant at present with all the discussion and debate concerning the Covid vaccinations. Keith draws on examples of attitudes towards vaccines in the past and the results to support his reasoning; and his constant use of questions is an effective way of stimulating the readers' thinking. The whole article flows well and his Christian comment at the end is appropriate, bringing the article to a sound conclusion. I liked the punch line of his final statement. Well done, Keith!*

*Second place went to Janet Fleming for her well-argued discussion from a Christian point of view comparing the value of human life with that of creatures. I awarded third place to Pat Kerr for her well-written opinion piece highlighting the problems in the Invercargill City Council.*

*My thanks go to all those who entered and I hope they each get the chance to see their articles in print somewhere.*

## First Place



Keith  
Willis

of  
Kaukapakapa

## Vaccination

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Is it fear, or is it ignorance? Why are so many people refusing to receive the Covid 19 vaccination?

Resistance to a new vaccine is not a new phenomenon. When Dr Jenner discovered the first vaccine, to combat smallpox, it was widely regarded as dangerous. It was even rumoured that, because it was made from the cowpox lesions on cows teats, that it would cause you to develop bovine characteristics. It did in fact eradicate smallpox from the earth.

Much later, when Dr Salk developed his polio vaccine, it too was thought to be dangerous. And it was, but only for the lab workers producing it from live virus. It was harmless to the recipients of the vaccine and has almost eradicated polio.

The vaccines to prevent measles, whooping-cough, mumps etc are widely accepted now that the rumoured connection with autism has been completely debunked.

In these supposedly enlightened times, why aren't the amazing successes of scientists in the rapid development of a Covid 19 vaccine, being universally celebrated? Why the distrust of science? Why the acceptance of these ridiculous conspiracy theories? With no supporting evidence, these vaccine objectors are evidently more afraid of the vaccine than of the virus!

Surely we should all be doing everything we can to protect our own health. There is so much emphasis lately being put on avoidance of harm through health & safety protocols. Some would say this is being taken to ridiculous extremes. A degree of personal responsibility is surely to be expected of everyone. A painless prick in the arm to protect yourself and your community is not much to ask.

Christianity teaches us to "Love our neighbours as we love ourselves." Love entails protecting from harm, as much as possible, both ourselves and those around us.

Get the jab!

## Second Place



Janet Fleming  
of Kaero

### Baby or Weta?

I picked up the newspaper and read. 'There will never be closure'. This was speaking of the family of murdered woman, Bridget Simmonds. Above it was written, 'To me she was unquestionably beautiful'. On reading this statement I purchased the paper so that I could read the article about this woman.

The following day I realized that the second statement referred to a weta. I was disgusted and felt sorry for the family who had lost their precious daughter, as I felt that statement was an insult. Weta were bugs we had to clear from the bach toilet when we went on holiday as children.

Our country has approved abortion of babies on demand, while on the other hand we have animal rights. Where are the rights for those innocent humans? I wonder do they receive the grand farewell that was given to a baby orca recently.

I love animals and birds and other creatures, but sadly, we have got things out of perspective. Could it be due to the fact that God gave a special position to mankind when He stated, "Let us make man in our image." and our country has now to a larger extent rejected God. When will we again realize that a tiny baby is of great value and that human life is so very special?

Are bugs and weevils and beetles more precious than woman and men?

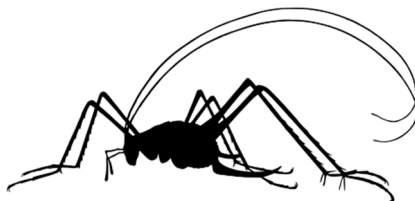
Or do we give greater value to a colourful clucking hen?

Is a fish worth more than a baby, or a cow than a girl or boy?

There really is no comparing to a precious bundle of joy.

I'm sorry we've got things muddled, let's get back to reality,

Human life is of far more value than a weta a bug or a flea.



## Third Place



Pat Kerr  
of Roxburgh

## Trouble in the South

Invercargill's city council (ICC) is in trouble. Since the last election there seems to be a circle of discontent, a fifth column. When two newspapers headline contentious issues on the same day something is seriously wrong. (Otago Daily Times; *Sir Tim Declares Bullying*: Southland Times; *Deputy Calls Out Mayor*: 12-08-2021).

Sir Tim Shadbolt is on one side crying foul; gang-like bullying, abusive attitudes and words, and feeling undermined personally and professionally. He took one deputy mayor to court, won the case, but must pay costs as the loser was declared bankrupt. Knighted for twenty years service as Invercargill's mayor, his brand "Shadbolt", charismatic speeches and some innovative suggestions -international airport- have ensured his re-election.

Opposing are newly elected councillors and paid staff declaring mayoral incompetence, a 'dinosaur', preferring paper to computers, who hoards archival papers in council properties, Three mayors wrote to the Ombudsman about their concerns.

The Ombudsman recommended an independent review costing thousands of dollars. Terms like 'toxic work environment', 'inappropriate behaviour', and 'ignorance of Standing Orders, Meeting Procedures and Behaviour' surfaced. Training and professional development were recommended to elected members and staff alike.

This year a second expensive review was implemented investigating continuing in-house bickering and unresolved issues.

Invercargill has major expensive problems concerning the Museum, Andersons Park, Rugby Park, CBD redevelopment and daily management, without costly witch-hunts, immature 'professionalism' or 'dirty laundry' airing in the media. Elected members must learn to be professional, learning new skills and following time-honoured procedures. Paid staff are employed for their contracted skills.

Negative publicity undermines ratepayers' confidence and will affect elections. Candidates will reap what they sow.

Meantime, where is love, forgiveness, and teamwork that ratepayers and councillors alike have expected, and been served, in the past?

No one can work in a toxic finger-pointing workplace.



# Competitions for December 2021

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

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

**Font:** Arial, 10 pt **Heading:** Bold, 18 pt **Line spacing:** Multiple 1.2

**Spacing between Paragraphs:** 6 pt **Paragraph Indentation:** None

**Alignment:** Justified. **Send a photo** of yourself for publishing purposes.

**NB: If you are not sure which level you're on, email Debbie McDermott at:**  
**[level1@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:level1@nzchristianwriters.org)**

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

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

**Requirement:** Write an engaging devotion or reflection piece that describes to your reader which sounds and smells of Christmas mean most to you, and why. (400 words)

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

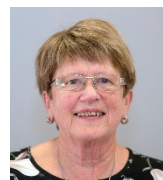


*Debbie*

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

**Requirement:** Write a rousing tribute expressing gratitude to police, fire, emergency, healthcare, and any other essential services people you can think of who are required to be on duty at Christmas time. (300 words)

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



*Jeanette*

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

**Requirement:** In modern language write a poem in blank verse extolling the attributes of God.

(20 lines maximum)

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



*Julia*



**NZ CHRISTIAN WRITERS** is a nationwide collective of authors, bloggers, editors, lyricists, poets, publishers, songwriters, storytellers and writers throughout New Zealand. Along with our bi-monthly magazines and competitions we offer inspiring seminars and writers retreats to encourage, inspire and upskill people in their writing.

NZ Christian Writers' vision is to cultivate a vibrant community of Christian writers by connecting them to other like-minded writers in New Zealand. We welcome both beginner and experienced writers.