

JUNE - JULY 2022

# THE CHRISTIAN writer

## SEE INSIDE FOR

*Omega Christian Writers Conference*  
By Iola Goulton

Poetry by:  
David Hollis  
Janet Fleming  
Dave Canovas  
Ruth Linton  
Rodney Hickman

Book Reviews:  
*Scatterlogical Wisdom*  
by Frances Hall

*The House That Wade Built*  
by Kay Petersen

Short Story:  
*Good Morning My Boy* by Mel Wood  
Writing Competitions and more. . .

A magazine of NZ Christian Writers



**Mission:** *Connecting Christian writers in New Zealand.*

**Vision:** *To encourage and inspire 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)

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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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# The Christian Writer

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## Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor   Membership Secretary   Book Review Requests
Page 4	President's Report – Justin St Vincent
Page 5	Editorial: Hit the Mark – Kathryn Paul
Page 6	Notices
Page 7	Wellington NZCW Event, June 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
Page 8	Omega Christian Writers Conference – Iola Goulton
Page 9	Book Review: <i>Scatterlogical Wisdom</i> by Frances Hall – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 9	Book Review: <i>The House That Wade Built</i> by Kay Petersen – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 10	Up Upon the Watchtower – poem by David Hollis
Page 10	A Mother's Work – poem by Janet Fleming
Page 11	Why God? – poem by Dave Canovas
Page 12	Good Morning My Boy – short story by Mel Wood
Page 16	Professional Writing Services – Free Advertising for Members
Page 18	Stimulating Activities for Our Local Group – Ruth Linton
Page 19	Why? – poem by Ruth Linton
Page 19	Gardens – poem by Ruth Linton
Page 20	Find a Local Writers Group / Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 21	Welcome to Rod's Brief Blogs – Rodney Hickman
Page 22	Writing Competitions Points Board – Prize Winners!

## CW Competitions

Page 22	Level One Results	Page 32	Level Three Results
Page 28	Level Two Results	Page 35	Competitions for August 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](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org)**

# President's Report



Welcome to our June-July 2022 edition of *The Christian Writer*. Thank you for being part of our collective and for what you bring to the world of Christian writing and publishing here in New Zealand.

Great News! We are currently 40 percent full for NZ Christian Writers' 40th Anniversary Retreat at Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga. We will be hosting this very special time together from Thursday 27th April to Sunday 30th April 2023 and have already SOLD OUT of our cottage accommodation. However, house accommodation (three bedrooms, sleeps six) is available at the special discounted rate of \$390 per person.

We thank the Big Toe Foundation who are making our 40th Anniversary Retreat an opportunity for an affordable and memorable time. Costs are all-inclusive with accommodation and catering per person for three nights. Visit the Flaxmill Retreat Centre website for details: [www.flaxmillbay.co.nz](http://www.flaxmillbay.co.nz)

Our first confirmed speaker is Anya McKee, Senior Editor and Publishing Consultant of Torn Curtain Publishing, speaking on *The Power of Excellence* and *The Power of Collaboration*. We will be announcing more keynote seminar speakers closer to April 2023 and are excited for this significant milestone and celebration event for NZ Christian Writers. We encourage all members to register early to secure their place, and avoid disappointment, as our Board anticipates this event being fully booked. To register, fill in our online form available here: [www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2023/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2023/)

We've had many new members join us over the last few months. As you may know, we offer complimentary Writer Profiles and Book Features to all our members. If you are a new member and don't yet have a Writer Profile published on our website, do feel free to reach out to me for details on how we can publish this online for you. Further information is available by emailing me here: [president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org)

Congratulations to talented photographer and member, Imelda Cruz Wood, for her winning cover photo, *Old House New Dawn*. It was taken at dawn during May 2021. This abandoned farmhouse is in Te Ore Ore district on the outskirts of Masterton.

Once again thank you to our Board Members, Local Group Leaders, Competition Coordinator and Event Volunteers who continue to faithfully serve to help support, encourage and uplift all our members.

Be blessed as you read this edition of *The Christian Writer*.

Blessings  
Justin St Vincent

# Editorial: Hit the Mark

by Kathryn Paul



What does it mean to be a Christian writer? First of all to identify ourselves as Christian we need a personal faith in and a relationship with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The starting point is Jesus Christ, including His life, death on the cross and His resurrection. He represents and connects us to Father God. When we choose by faith to believe in Jesus Christ and Father God, both of them together send us the Holy Spirit who births our own inner spirit and takes up His dwelling place within us. He in turn becomes our Helper and connects us spiritually to Jesus Christ and Father God. We become part of a spiritually connected family circle of four, including ourselves.

The best illustration I've seen in nature that helped me understand this spiritually connected family is a tree stump with three trunks coming out of it. It had room for me to nestle on the middle of the stump from where the trunks rose out above me, cradling me as if I was in a bird's nest. I could interact with each trunk as an individual yet they were all connected to each other through the inner life-flow within the tree. I wrote about this in our previous issue in my Haiku:

One base stump, three trunks  
Hollow, loving space for me  
God's Trinity tree.

The difference between Christianity and other religions is that Christianity isn't a belief system of rules. It's a very real connection with a vibrant, living, powerful, Holy God who will make His presence known to you and communicate with you when you seek Him.

Prayer is a vital part of this ongoing connection. When we pray we give God opportunities to answer us so specifically that He leaves us with no doubt He's listening and here for us. Reading the Bible helps us understand how to pray and how to live a life that demonstrates our love for Him. As Christian writers it's important we cover our writing efforts with prayer and invite God to help us write what He wants us to say. Jesus Christ promised the Holy Spirit would be our counsellor. If ever we are stuck or unsure how to move forward with anything, including our writing, we have the best counsellor available 24/7. He's only a moment away from answering and waits patiently for an invitation to be our writing partner.

Did you know that the word 'coincidence' was not in God's original Hebrew language? I've been trying to take that word out of my vocabulary and it's amazing how much it builds my faith when I do that. God gets a lot more glory for the amazing things He does. Have you ever read a devotion and it just *happened* to hit the mark for you that day? Coincidence – not! That's the Holy Spirit speaking to you through the person who wrote it. I encourage all Christian writers to keep praying and keep writing – you never know when and how your effort is going to hit the mark for someone else who reads it in the future.

With love in Jesus, from Kathryn.

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



# Notices

## **Our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Writers Retreat is in 2023!**

Visit [www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat) to book your space. The accommodation is already filling so be sure to secure your room today. We and our guest speakers want to see you there!



## **Writers Group Leaders Wanted**

We need more leaders, including for the North Auckland region, due to high membership growth. 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. If there are no Christian writers groups in your area of New Zealand and you are willing to host one, please 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 to have 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>

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

**FREE**



**WELLINGTON**

**NZCW EVENT**

**18 JUNE 2022**



**George Bryant** *qsm*



**Staci McLean**

**SEMINARS :** "How To Share Your Testimony Through Writing, Speaking & Casual Chats" (Staci McLean), "How To Write A Book Fast" (Staci McLean), "NZ 2050 & FAQ About Writing & Publishing" (George Bryant, *qsm*), "Social Media For Authors" (Staci McLean), "Public Speaking For Writers" (Staci McLean & George Bryant, *qsm*).

**DATE & TIME:**

Saturday  
18th June 2022  
8:45am - 2:50pm

**VENUE:**

Petone Baptist Church  
38 Buick Street, Petone  
Wellington 5012

**COST:**

**FREE**  
Koha donation welcomed  
**ALL WELCOME**

**To Register, Contact George Bryant:** [bryantgw@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bryantgw@xtra.co.nz) or Mobile: 027-314-6690

# Omega Christian Writers Conference

## Calling all Fiction Writers!

by lola Goulton

US novelist and writing instructor, Steven James, will be the keynote speaker at the 2022 Omega Christian Writers Conference in New South Wales in October. Steven James is the well-known author of more than forty books, including the award-winning *Bowers Files* series. His most recent novel is *Synapse*, set in the near future where robots have become sentient, and which is written in a unique combination of first-person, second-person and third-person points of view.

Steven is also the author of several nonfiction titles for children and two books for writers: *Story Trumps Structure* and *Troubleshooting Your Novel*. He will be leading two fiction workshops at the conference, which also includes sessions on writing for children, writing nonfiction, and marketing.

The conference will be held at the Peppers Salt Resort & Spa, Kingscliff, in northern New South Wales from 7th to 9th October 2022.

Early bird registration is open from now until 18th June and is AU\$445 for members and AU\$525 for non-members.



*Omega Writers Conference Accommodation*

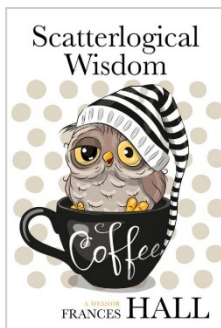
Transport and accommodation is extra and Omega Writers have negotiated special conference rates for attendees. There will be a shuttle from nearby Coolangatta Airport.

Omega Writers is an Australian-based organisation for Christian writers that includes several members from New Zealand. Omega hosts the annual CALEB Awards for Christian writers who are from Australia and New Zealand. The 2022 winners will be announced at the conference.

If you're a fiction writer, this is a great opportunity to hear from an acclaimed writer and instructor. There will also be the opportunity for virtual meetings with two US-based literary agents and Zoom or in-person meetings with a range of publishers, editors and industry experts from Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

For more information about the conference and links to booking forms, visit <https://www.omegawriters.org/conference/>





### **Scatterlogical Wisdom** **A Memoir**

By Frances Hall

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Wild Side Publishing 2020

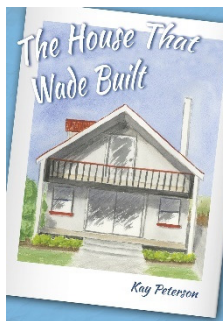
The title and cover of this book suggest a read that could be somewhat whimsical and entertaining. Readers will not be disappointed.

In her down-to-earth memoir, Frances traces her life journey from childhood where she describes herself as a visionary – full of energy and impulse. She has a bubbly personality, a wacky sense of humour and an indomitable spirit. She tackles life head on. With madcap hilarity she advises: 'If you can't see the light at the end of the tunnel, march up there and light the darn thing yourself.'

Through two failed marriages and the responsibility of raising four children alone on limited resources, Frances has also experienced the tough side of life. She writes: 'Doubts and fears were bludgeoned into submission as I hacked my way through life.'

In her memoir, she reveals her homespun philosophy and her own version of wisdom. 'My life has been an attempt to make sense of wisdom. In hindsight, I was always going to learn from my mistakes, not from the wise words of history.' She also claims: 'I'd rather be remembered for how I coped under duress than how I blossomed in success.'

Woven throughout her life story is her faith in God which has held her fast through the good times and the bad. I found her book refreshingly different and thought-provoking. There's no pretence and amongst the hilarity and laughter there are true pearls of wisdom.



### **The House That Wade Built**

By Kay Peterson

Review by Julia Martin

Published by The Copy Press, Nelson 2021

Covid-19 lockdowns have proved to be profitable occasions for some people. With time on her hands, Kay has had the opportunity to fulfil her desire of writing her first novel.

The story begins in the 1970s in a fictitious small New Zealand town named Awaiti, located on the West coast of the South Island. After a broken engagement, Karen plans to move away and make a new start.

Her intentions are interrupted however by an unexpected invitation to partner a former school colleague named Wade at his 21st birthday party. The friendship develops but there's one impediment – Karen is a Christian and Wade is not.

When this difficulty is resolved and Wade becomes a true follower of Jesus Christ, the couple marry and move into the large house Wade has built. Their dream of a big family has an initial setback, but within a short time they are the proud parents of three sons, followed by the adoption and fostering of seven more needy children all under the age of ten years.

The happy blended family faces many challenges including a major fire in the area and a devastating flood that threatens the lives of loved ones. It's easy reading and the book shows the way an open home, loving hearts and a strong Christian faith can have a significant and lasting impact on a community. I'm pleased to learn that Kay's second novel is on the way.

# Up Upon the Watchtower

by David Hollis

Up upon the watchtower  
in cold dawn's pale light I see  
dust clouds rising on the dark  
horizon  
from the feet of my enemy.

The city lay quiet below me  
slumbering without a care  
while the horsemen thunder closer  
they sleep on unaware.

I sound the warning blast  
I give it all I've got  
bodies tumble out through doors  
and everyone looks up.

Some scratch their heads in  
confusion  
others spin round and round  
some simply stand and stare  
while others shout you down.

Within the city walls  
they don't see what I see  
up upon the watchtower  
the future is clear to me.

Be vigilant you watchers  
through the dark and lonely night  
you see what is approaching  
while for others it's out of sight.

Be careful to pay attention  
and to declare what you see  
and don't hold back, not even  
if the enemy is you and me.

*Go set a watchman, let him  
declare what he sees.  
(Isaiah 21:6, NKJV)*

# A Mother's Work

by Janet Fleming

How nice to be a mother  
When children all are fed,  
The bench is clean and tidy  
And baby's tucked in bed.

But what about those moments  
When things are not so bright,  
And nothing in your household  
Will seem to go quite right?

You've piles of dirty dishes  
Arranged upon the floor  
With baby screaming loudly  
A puddle by the door.

The teens are playing softball  
Oh, what a beauty pass,  
But did he need to aim it  
Straight at that pane of glass?

Then hubby picks that moment  
"Where did you leave the hose?"  
As Lassie steals the mutton  
From underneath your nose.

Now take a sec to ponder  
Just what your mother did,  
When she was sick and weary  
And you, a sweet, wee kid.

For Mother's work is precious  
Through all those nights and days  
As tiny lives are moulded  
By what she does and says.

And there's a book that gives us  
God's wisdom in our task  
And He will help and guide us  
If only we will ask.

So when this 'nest' is emptied  
This mother's work all done  
I hope my children thank me  
Because I was their mum!



*Photo by Jonathan Petersson on [Pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)*

## Why God?

by Dave Canovas

On this road, I am aimless, inconsistent, out of sight but why God are You still constant and always by my side?

I am Your riches' squanderer. I am prodigal. I am blind but why God am I favoured, Your most desired?

Farther away from You, my sins separate me yet I find myself near you always.  
My God, am I worthy?

My errors pierce Your heart, my pride, thorns on Your sides yet God You still see me with such loving eyes.

When I am worn and all spent, You have always carried me through. My God of second chances, will You get tired of me too?

Father, when all is gone, when all else fails, my lasting God in my demise, You will remain.

# Good Morning My Boy

Published in *Chic Magazine* in May 2000

## Short Story by Mel Wood

The glow of the early morning sun permeating my room felt so pleasantly warm on my cheeks. I struggled to open my eyes and managed to peep through my blanket to look at my bedside table clock. It was six o'clock in the morning. I saw Yaya Caring's figured silhouette by the glass window carefully gathering the curtain before putting on the curtain ring around it to let more sunshine in. She inched closer to the windowsill and for quite a while stared blankly at the direction of the sun. I thought I heard her heave a sigh as she quietly went on doing her chore.

There was an unusual air of melancholy about Yaya Caring's demeanour these past few days that was calling my attention. Coming home late Friday afternoon, I caught that sunken look on her face. She was seemingly lost in her thoughts while her favourite television program was on. I found it strange knowing her as somebody who would always find something to laugh about in any situation. Yesterday, I smelt the faint scent of crushed ginger and oil of wintergreen poultice. It was competing with the aroma of my morning coffee when she served my breakfast. Last night, I noticed a limp in the way she walked and saw a white linen wound around her left knee. Dismissing it as just a consequence of her love for mung beans, I jokingly told her to accept the fact that she had reached that age when she had to give up her love affair with beans and lentils to avoid her arthritic pain.

"Yes, I know. This is the effect of ageing," she replied.

She was probably so engrossed in her thoughts this morning that she hadn't even noticed I had woken up. I quietly watched her move about picking up after my previous night's mess. She was finding it hard to bend down and was labouring to straighten up her back. That was when I noticed her formerly dark brown hair, which was perpetually pulled up and neatly gathered to a bun, had turned salt and pepper now. I made a mental calculation of her age: Dad was fifty years old now, and if Yaya Caring was eighteen years older than he was, she would be about 68 years old.

I remember Dad telling me she was from Negros Oriental in the Visayas Islands. She was the middle child of a peasant couple who had nine other children. She just finished high school and was barely out of her teens when first employed in my grandparents' house. Dad was then five years old and was about to enter kindergarten school. It was Yaya Caring who walked him to the nearby Catholic School in the morning and fetched him from his classes in the afternoon. On days when Dad felt too sleepy after a long day in school, Yaya Caring would pick him up and carry him on her back on their way home.

She would attend PTA meetings on behalf of Dad's mum and was smart enough to jot down details of the meeting so she could hand an accurate report to *Lola*. Up until he was about to finish his primary school, Yaya Caring would read books to Dad before tucking him up in bed at night and would nudge him to pray before closing his eyes.

The bond between ward and guardian was just too strong so when Dad married Mum, Yaya Caring went to live with them in their new home. I guess fate had it that she never married and never had a son, so she took Dad as her own, like she raised me as if I were the precious grandson she'd never had.

"Gud murning, mi boy..." she blurted out in her broken English with that unmistakable southern accent, when finally, she noticed me move. But there was something I missed in the way she greeted me today – her excitement about the new day and that contagious grin she always wore in the morning whenever she entered my room. I waited for her to go on to deliver the next lines following her greeting, but there was only silence that followed. In my senses, I was sure, there was something wrong with Yaya Caring's mien this morning! But before I could even speak, her hand had reached out for the linen blanket still wrapped around my waist, then pulled it off after giving me a gentle push, nudging me to get up so she could make my bed and tidy up my bedroom.

I groaned and tried to snatch back my blanket, but she had swiftly piled it into her laundry basket. "This is no ordinary Sunday, Son. You can't stay all day long in bed," she said softly.

My earliest memories were of Yaya Caring waking me up every morning with the same cheerful greeting, "Gud morning my boy...taym to weyk up! Get up alredi and tenk God por a byutipul morning." In most days, she would follow it up with, "Wen you weyk up in the morning, oper to God your day...ask Him to guide you wen you have to meyk decisions, dat you will not hurt da feelings of da other people, dat you will become angel to others and not like Satan."

I would roll out laughing every time she spoke the English language, which she intentionally did to amuse me. But that didn't mean I did not take her seriously. Yaya Caring may be found wanting compared to highly educated women, but I tell you, the values she taught me would probably be the same values my own mother would have instilled in my young mind, had God not called her early on.

"You don't have to speak English, Yaya Caring...you can speak in Filipino or even in your native dialect and I will probably understand you better. It makes me feel dizzy hearing you speak in English!"

"Dis is a pri country, my boy, why stop me talking Inglis?" She would retort, and we would both laugh out loud.

Yaya Caring had a cheerful way of dealing with life and she managed to maintain the same cheerful mien after years of faithful service to our family. She was a dedicated woman of the house who made it her priority in life to serve Dad and me.



By the way, I was delivered via caesarean section. Right after the operation, Mum suffered eclamptic seizures that rendered her comatose. For several days she was confined at the hospital's ICU with all those life-sustaining gadgets attached to her body. Twenty-one days later, she was able to gather enough energy to open her eyes, but only to take a last look at Dad's face. After which, she breathed her last without seeing the son to whom she gave her life.

Thank God, there was Yaya Caring, who dutifully took over the responsibilities Mum left behind, including caring for three-week-old me and serving Dad. At age 25 he was too devastated to run his household, let alone get over the tragedy of losing his wife who he loved so dearly.

The alarm clock sounded just as Yaya Caring succeeded in pulling me out of bed. Time to prepare for the biggest day of my life.

I decided to just leave Yaya Caring to her musings and respect her silence. She'd be herself again I assured myself. I paused to look out the window and whispered a sincere thanks to the Lord for a very beautiful, sunshiny morning. I offered this very, very special day to Him, and asked for more guidance as this day would be the start of a new phase in my adult life.

If you'd care to know, today's my wedding day. My fiancée, Helen and I have been sharing a beautiful relationship of five years of courtship. Today, I can hardly wait to recite our marriage vows and obtain the church's blessing that would finally seal our lives together. I could never thank God enough for this wonderful morning.

Dad suggested that we live in this same house with him, so there was no need for us to build a new home. However, we made some necessary changes to accommodate my soon-to-be-wife and our planned brood of six, who, hopefully, would fill our home with little voices, lots of joy and laughter. Of course, we hired new house helpers to assist my wife in managing our household.

Yaya Caring was still in my room when I stepped out of the shower. Neatly laid out on my newly made bed was everything I needed to get dressed for the occasion – my neatly pressed slacks, creaseless undershirt for my *Barong Tagalog*, new socks that matched my brown slacks, my handkerchief and at the foot of my bed was my new pair of shoes.

When Yaya Caring opened the closet to get my *Barong Tagalog*, I thought I heard her snifle.

"Are you okay, Yaya?"

"Yes, I'm okay," she replied avoiding my gaze.

"If you're tired, you can just rest in your room. The new housemaid will do the chores from now on." She must really be in pain, I thought, so I told her again to just rest inside her room. "The new household help will do the chores," I assured her. To my surprise, her shoulders shook, and I heard her sob.

“When are you going to send me to the home for the aged?” she asked in Filipino, when she regained her composure. “I am old and slow now. I feel ashamed not being able to perform my duties,” she added.

I was stunned. How could I have been so insensitive? How could I have been so ungrateful?

“Will you allow me to stay for one more day after your wedding?” I heard her ask.

For a moment, I was just staring at her and the years past just seemed to flash back before me – I saw her hands rocking my hammock, nursing me back to health when I was running a fever. Rushing to pick me up when I stumbled, hugging me tight when I cowered in fear of thunder and lightning and much like a mother hen, she fiercely protected me from the harmful world outside of home.

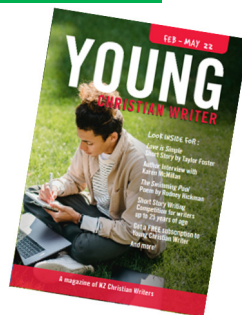
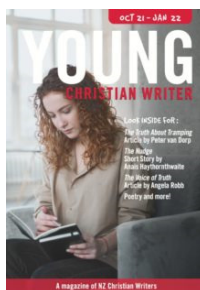
I needed her then, it's me she needed now. Would I have the heart to treat her like an old, used rug? Would it be fair to just send her to an institution and forget that she was once indispensable to me?

I felt that lump in my throat when I hugged her tight. “No!” I assured her. “You will stay with me in this house and with my wife. You will still see my children and you will watch them grow up. And I will still want you to wake me up every day, to remind me to thank God for beautiful mornings.”

Now I realized, more than beautiful mornings, I should be thankful to God for Yaya Caring, who unselfishly filled the void in my life, started my mornings right and taught me how best to live this God-given life.

## Translations:

*Lola* – Grandmother, *Yaya* – Nanny, *Barong Tagalog* – Filipino men's formal attire



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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.

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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 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.

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## 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.

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# Stimulating Activities for Our Local Group

by Ruth Linton

It is always good in our local groups to try different activities to stir our imaginations and to encourage spontaneous creative writing. For their March meeting the Tauranga group tried two different activities – and had a lot of fun in the process.

For the first activity we all chose an object in the room then wrote a description of it pretending we were that object. There was much laughter (and a few way-out guesses) as we each took turns to read our descriptions aloud leaving the others to work out what we were. Objects ranged from coffee mugs to newel posts. Yes. Some of us didn't know what a newel post was...but we do now! Do you?

For the second activity we were each given ten words cut out of the local newspaper, *The Weekend Sun*. With only ten minutes allowed we had to produce an interesting, coherent article using all ten words. Several examples are given below and the words supplied are in bold print.

Both activities were fun and encouraged creativity. You could try them in your local group.

## 1. Judith Davies

What shall I do? I want to be of **service** to the **community**, but I had an accident, and now have no teeth! I used to hold a **workshop** at my **place** teaching people how to **furnish** their houses. Life **goes on** and they will all be here on Thursday!

I am **reduced** to tears. I have to force myself up to the **next level** to find a solution. That's it! The answer has dawned on me. I will go to **Toi-ohomai** Polytechnic College. They have a place for superannuants that provide free **dentures**!

Life certainly provides answers to dilemmas in strange places....

## 2. Denise James

“Let's go to **the show home** at **The Lakes** and think about its **potential**. It should take us **to the next level** so check its **construction** – no **bargains** as we want to **get back** what we invest. Then we can go on to the **restaurant** and **you can have your say**.”

(Note: The Lakes is a newish residential area on the outskirts of Tauranga.)

## 3. Elaine Dixon

Good morning staff. This **sale** needs a **boost** in order to **show** our customers how **big** our **plan** is. By **outperforming** our competitors we can **expand** our vision, that of **freely serving** our **poorer** clients.

## 4. Ruth Linton

**Tauranga** is a wonderful place to be over long **weekends**. There is a wide **choice** of activities to be enjoyed. Some are **action**-based activities for the young and the adventurous,



On the coast families can spend a **happy** day at the **beach**. Canine pets frolic in the sand that appears **gem**-studded as it sparkles in the sun.

Take a drive further inland near the Papamoa hills to view well-fed **herds** of cattle grazing, and even several **homes for horses**. The local council provides excellent **services**—water, roading, clean toilets, an airport and so on—to make time in the city most enjoyable.

## 5. Jan Pendergrast

I noticed this **Classified** advertisement in the local paper: Sale **is Now On!** I checked my **savings** then drove down to the furniture store. I didn't bother to **debate** with hubby as my reasoning was **as solid as**. It's **obvious** we older **humans** need decent **healthcare**, so I bought a **bed** with a bedspread covered in **tall poppies**.

## Why?

by Ruth Linton

Why did you come  
To a world so blotched and torn,  
Where sorrow reigns and evil  
spawns?

Why did you come?

I came as king  
To reign in righteousness and  
peace,  
To bring forgiveness and release.  
I came as king.

Where is your crown,  
Your sceptre and your throne?  
A crown of thorns to make your glory  
known?  
Where is your crown?

I rule above  
The systems of this earth's domain,  
God's redeeming love proclaim.  
I rule above.

Behold your king  
Who dies to conquer death.  
Submit and live, He lives to bless.  
Behold your king!

## Gardens

by Ruth Linton

God planted Eden's garden  
For beauty and delight,  
With responsibility and fellowship  
For those who cherished right:  
A symphony of colour;  
A pavilion of praise;  
Lavish fruit, perfume and texture,  
Joyous rest in leafy shade.

The choice to trust another  
Tore us from the Gardener's hand,  
Amid weeds and blights and thistles  
We now till infertile land.  
With backache, sweat and compost  
Our gardens come to birth,  
Inspired by dreams of Paradise  
While caring for God's earth.

Still another garden's planted  
In the soil of human flesh.  
We plant and weed and water –  
God's words like dew refresh.  
A crop of fruit and fragrance  
Cheer our loving Gardener's heart.  
A balm of herbs and spices  
To the wounded, health impart.

# Join a Writers Group

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

# WELCOME New and Returning Members:

## Andrew Stirling

Timaru

## Karen Baird

Auckland

## Carol Congalton

Tauranga

## Ken Smyth

Turangi

## Charlene Max

Dunedin

## Lijlanie Stander

Silverdale

## Clare Barnett

Hamilton

## Myan Subrayan

Armidale, Australia

## Diane Taylor

Titirangi

## Robert Norriss

Christchurch

## Graeme McNae

Auckland

## Sarah Griffin

Nelson

## Graham Missen

Tauranga

## Tracey Anne

Scott-Nicholson

## Haley Dewey

Dallas, USA

Auckland

## Jono Thompson

Christchurch

**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)

# Welcome to Rod's Brief Blogs

**No 55. 31st March 2022. It's all About 'Tomorrows'!**

by Rod Hickman

What I am sensing in my spirit is a revival coming to NZ. Revivals always come in the midst of troubled times. We are definitely in those times now. Revival comes through warriors. Warriors who have been tested and proven.

If you're going through it now...hang on! I see saints who are troubled by sickness that won't leave them in spite of prayer, faith and belief in the word... hang on! I see saints who have prayed earnestly for loved ones to be saved, yet no answered prayers yet... Hang on! I see saints whose vision has been darkened and cannot see much light in their tunnel... Hang on! Job has been there. We see (thankfully) that the devil is out to destroy, if not God then His people... hang on! These warriors are not all well-known warriors; some are but many are not known. God is sorting them out. Can you hang on and keep focused on our God when all around seems doomed?

God needs battle-hardened soldiers. Have you been wounded? Had your armour dented and tarnished? Feeling tired in the fight? You're the one He wants. Why you? Because you won't give glory or honour to anyone but Him. You know it's just Him and Him alone. So get ready New Zealand, it's nearly time. I was feeling tired and ready to quit and wrote a poem to that effect (see below). But God was kind to me and said, "not yet" and another poem rose up within me (see below). Like an Olympic athlete, there are a few more hurdles to cross. We cannot stop the race now; the last hurdle is almost in view.

## TAKE ME HOME

Am I any good to you?  
If not, then take me home  
Do I not please you?  
If not, then take me home

Am I just a hinderance?  
Then best to take me home  
I tried so hard yet failed  
Then best to take me home

I lost my call and vision  
So please now take me home

For all my life I've run  
It seems it's not enough  
Perhaps it should be another  
To get that job well done

Then all I have to say...  
It's best to take me home.

## A CALL TO WAR

I heard that bugle call  
It was to end-time war  
But I thought I was too old  
My rusty sabre, a piece of iron ore  
But that sound stirred within me  
From my distant past it came  
Rise up oh warrior  
Now lift up that Holy Name  
So I took that sword from its  
scabbard  
Its full length I did draw  
Which surprised me to the max  
It came our bright n' sharp like before  
Perhaps, just perhaps I can stand  
And ready myself for the fight again  
I feel his power, his presence and  
more  
And this time the fight will not be in  
vain. AMEN.

# Writing Competitions Points Board

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Sue Shelton	42	Ruth Jamieson	39	Jean Crane	42
Clive McKegg	30	Pam Driver	27	Jean Shewan	18
Lauren Allan	24	Susan Flanagan	15	Pat Kerr	15
Lorraine Dietrich	21	Christine Platt	12	Heather Vincent	12
Rodney Hickman	9	Ricolene Gounden	9	Pauline Marshall	12
		Kathryn Paul	9	Janet Fleming	9
				Ella Hamlin	9

Congratulations to our mid-year prize winners for Levels One and Two! Well done also to Sue Shelton and Clive McKegg who have been promoted from Level One to Level Two and to Ruth Jamieson who has been promoted from Level Two to Level Three!

Those in Level One and Two can start collecting points afresh on the writing competitions points board. 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 2022-Jan 2023 magazine edition.

All new members begin entering in 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 helpful constructive feedback via email from the judges.

## Competition Results

### Level One

**Judge: Debbie McDermott**

**Requirement:** Read Daniel 3:8-30, then write a true or fictional story about how you, or someone else, moved from the fearful 'What if' mindset to the 'Even if' faith-in-God mindset described in Daniel 3:18 and achieved a positive outcome as a result. (500 words)

## General Comments

*I was extremely pleased to receive ten good entries to this competition as it was not the easiest of topics to tackle. Congratulations to everyone who gave it a go.*

*Particularly noteworthy are those entrants who shared at a deep level about how God has or is enabling them to rise above their fear and pain into a place of confidence and victory as they choose to trust him with their situation. While only four contestants scored in this competition, the points difference between first and last place was negligible—meaning all ten contestants made a great effort.*

*While entries were well-written and a pleasure to read, minor mistakes with grammar and punctuation resulted in a loss of marks for some who would have done better in the competition otherwise. Today I want to discuss common mistakes made with speech marks.*

### **Speech Marks (“...”)**

- *When writing dialogue, if one person is speaking at length across more than one paragraph, then it is correct to begin each paragraph of their time of talking with opening speech marks. However, closing speech marks should ONLY be inserted at the end of the final paragraph of that person’s speech to show they have finished talking.*
- *In a couple of the entries, speech marks were facing the wrong way because the writer had put a space before or after them. It is actually incorrect to put a space before or after any form of punctuation that is before closing speech marks at the end of a piece of dialogue—or sentence for that matter.*
- *When using dialogue, the closing punctuation mark should be before the closing speech marks, not after them. For example, “Choose”. should be “Choose.”*

## First Place



Lauren  
Allan  
of Taupo

### **God’s Plan**

When I was little, I dreamt of someday becoming a writer. As it was, my first poem was published in a school newsletter when I was about 6 years old. It felt so good to have others read what I had written even if it was about a skeleton in a scary cave that gave me the shivers. I was hooked with the writing bug after that. I worked diligently at school to improve my skills and in my spare time I would spend endless hours writing stories and poems. I loved writing so much that I taught myself to touch type while still at Primary School. It excited me to create and type out my stories on fresh white paper. If anybody asked what I wanted to do when I grew up, I would always say that I was going to be a writer. With this goal in mind at Highschool I achieved top in my class at English, and I went on to study a Bachelor of Media Arts. For a while as a young adult, I worked as a freelancer and then for a short time as a Photojournalist. I was blossoming and living my dream however life then dramatically changed.



I fell in, what I felt was at the time, 'love'. It couldn't have been further from the truth. In this meant to be happy place, my mind, body, soul and spirit were abused. Satan worked hard to strip me of any self-esteem, security and confidence I had. I was told daily of how stupid I was and called every awful name you could think of. I was made to feel that I wasn't good enough and told that I wasn't good at anything. Life got darker and bleak even though I held on as hard as I could to the light, to the belief of God. Writing became my confidant, my safe place, my connection to the Holy Spirit and to myself. I could share all the ugliness of my reality and receive clarity with instructions. The Evil One didn't realise that the more he hurt me the more I depended on God. In doing so he left me no choice but to give myself wholeheartedly to the care of my Heavenly Father. So, I surrendered. Initially it took every bit of strength I had. Breaking out of the 'what if' to the 'even if' faith in God mindset, eventually contributed to saving my life.

Now, many years later as I tap into my powerful potential, I thankfully live a beautiful life of true love, peace and joy. I am a writer who rediscovered who I always was. Now I write for God, serving by providing enlightened messages of hope, love, and guidance. As my calling becomes clearer, I realise that in my past, my God given purpose was ultimately suppressed by the darkness. However, adversity strengthened my character and provided an insight to life I would have never otherwise experienced to bring me home. I am truly grateful and fulfilled to know by grace I am living our loving God's plan.

## Second Place



Sue  
Shelton  
of Hastings,  
Hawkes Bay

## Faith Overcomes Fear

I sometimes ask myself – how would I react when faced with a truly frightening situation? Would I panic and run, reacting from my own 'what if' mind-set, or respond out of faith-filled confidence in God's care, choosing to trust Him even if it seems to go against my own initial impulse?

Recently I heard the story of a woman faced with just such a dilemma. Her name is Ruth. On entering her apartment one day after being out shopping, she suddenly became aware that there was someone else in the room. She recognised the man as a builder who had recently done some work for her. He approached her, took hold of her and holding a knife to her neck said these words: "Ruth, don't struggle or call out, just walk up the stairs".

How terrified Ruth must have been.

Ruth's immediate instinct was to pray. She silently prayed that God would bind the powers of evil that were present and send his holy angels to protect her. She prayed that this man would know the love of God even in this traumatic moment. She then turned and looking the man right in the eye said "God loves you. He doesn't want you to destroy your life by doing this thing."

In that instant, the man paused and stood frozen to the spot. Finally, he hung his head and sighed. Ruth seized her chance, slipped out of his grasp and ran to the front door. Out on the street, it was midday. Many people were walking up and down the road. Ruth sat down on the kerb in shock. Then, much to her amazement she looked up and saw the man sitting right there on the kerb beside her. Ruth told the man that she wanted to pray for him and she did. She thanked God for keeping her safe, then she prayed for the man, and as she did she saw the tears begin to fall from his eyes. When she had finished praying he looked down at her and said "I can't believe what I've almost done. I need a saviour". Ruth told the man about Jesus, about His love and that he need only believe to receive eternal life.

The first time Ruth knew about the profound impact that this event had on this man and his family was when his wife contacted her to let her know that the entire family had eventually given their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ. It tells us many times in the bible not to fear, and I believe that the best way to banish fear is to step out in faith. Ruth stepped out in a most traumatic situation and spoke the truth of God's word and the love of God transformed the situation.

How would I respond in such an extreme situation? Well, to be honest, I don't know. I do hope however, that like Ruth, I would step out in faith rather than fear.

## Third Place Equal



Lorraine  
Dittrich  
of Mosgiel,  
Dunedin

### When 'What if' is Replaced with 'Even if'

I had just tidied up the kitchen when the phone rang. Before I could answer, I heard my husband's voice. I realised it was that expected call from New Zealand. I held my breath, unsure of my husband's final answer. I listened attentively: "Yes, John, I decided to accept your job offer. We will start immediately with the necessary arrangements to move to New Zealand as soon as possible."

Though we discussed this massive step in depth, hearing his answer made me shudder inwardly. The reality of leaving our beloved country for good was overwhelming. That included our son and family who would remain in South Africa, our parents, siblings, and friends. Life as we knew it from birth.

After a sleepless night, my husband and I sat down with our two girls, seventeen and sixteen, respectively, and shared the news gently.

Tears flowed freely, triggered by shock mixed with anger and fear. A torrent of ‘what ifs’ came down upon us.

Linda, the eldest, had just completed her Year 13, sobbed: “what if I won’t be accepted at university? What if I won’t be able to make friends? What if I would be only miserable and never happy again. Everything will be different, strange, and maybe horrible.”

The youngest, Naomi, who still needed to complete her last year at school, shared similar concerns. Teary, she added: “What if I won’t achieve excellence in my subjects as I had done so far? Every subject will be in English, not in Afrikaans.”

Though English was compulsory at school, living in a primarily rural Afrikaans-speaking community, we did not get that much practice in using English.

My husband and I were also struggling with our own ‘what ifs,’ which we dared not verbalise to the girls.

My biggest ‘what if’ evolved more around the family’s wellbeing in a new country and that we might regret this invasive step. My husband’s ‘what if’ was mainly about proper provision for the family in his new position.

The story of Daniel resonated with me as I was seeking the Lord’s help in all this (Daniel 3:8-30 NIV). I realised we created our own furnace, ignited by doubt and fed by fear. All we saw were the four of us fighting on our own against the flames of the unknown that awaited.

Ashamed, I admitted this to the Lord, and He reminded me of the words in Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’ (NIV).

Suddenly, it became apparent that a fifth person was with us in the ‘what if’ furnace. Every flame of ‘what if’ died out and the cooling, healing water of ‘even if’ poured into our souls. We knew that even if some of the ‘what ifs’ materialised, it would be part of his plans for us. Doubt was replaced by hope, and fear was replaced with the certainty of His presence with every step into the unknown.

## Bibliography

Scripture references are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION.

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# Third Place Equal



Clive  
McKegg  
of Whangarei

## Trial by Fire

The knock comes at dawn. I ask the officers what the problem is, but I already know. “Sir, you have been tagged by our AI software for anti-state activities including health and safety violations, hate speech, and attempts to radicalise others. Come with us.” Dread tugs at my heart.

At the Station a stern woman with cold eyes has me strapped into an elaborate chair. A camera and a microphone point toward me. After a couple of routine questions from the interrogator, a Siri-like voice emanates from a laptop: “Proceed.”

Cold-eyes doesn’t waste time: “This is your last chance. Our algorithms have analysed your travel, internet activity, spending, social media posts, plus both your digital and private conversations. We have a complete profile of your offending showing a repeating pattern of spreading misinformation, delusional anti-science religious activity and inciting others to question state-approved truth.”

“Private conversations?” I ask.

“Of course. Our software was triggered by a pattern of harmful words and phrases you used such as ‘sin’, ‘repentance’, ‘the fear of God’ and ‘judgement’. These are clearly linked to traumatising of the vulnerable and the potential for radicalisation. Under the Domestic Terrorism Act you have been monitored continuously via your cell phone for the last two years.”

“Moreover, you have repeatedly refused to receive your free, voluntary health and security tracking implant, even though this has meant that your digital currency has been frozen, and your bio-genetic enhancements are out of date. You are a burden on productive society, a health risk, and a corrupting influence. We have done our best, even providing access to approved religious organisations to de-radicalise you, but you have persisted.”

For the first time I notice a large device in the corner, like an oversized drink display cabinet, with what looks like heatproof glass in the door. A few ashes have spilled from the tray at the bottom.

The inspector sees me shudder and smiles briefly. “I see you understand the gravity of your situation. That’s why we are giving you one more chance to pledge your allegiance to the Great Leader. Then after receiving some psychiatric treatment, you may go home to a happy life.”

“So, you’re saying that I have sinned against the state, I should repent and fear the one who is playing God, so I won’t be judged by being incinerated?” I reply in a moment of brave but wasted irony. My heart is pounding.

“Choose”.

I gather my thoughts. I sense the familiar impressions of the Holy Spirit saying, “It’s okay, we’ve trained for this.” I reply to the interrogator, “I will not worship or serve your false god.”

The voice from the laptop intones: “End of trial. Based on biometric feedback and previously gathered data the probability of reoffending is 99.86 percent. The likelihood of successful reprogramming is 24.35 percent. Given the age of the subject and degree of delusion any treatment is deemed uneconomical. Immediate euthanasia authorised.”

I quiet my breathing and start whispering the familiar Psalms as the machine is switched on and the door opens. *“Preserve me God, for I take refuge in You...”*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 16:1 (NASB)

## Level Two

### Judge: Pamela Lowrey

**Requirement:** Write a letter expressing praise or appreciation for something done well, using appropriate Bible verses. (150-200 words)

### General Comments

*All eight entrants successfully met the requirements of this competition and have honoured the memory of Janice Gillgren who set the topic.*

*The art of letter writing seems to have diminished in this busy life, especially in thanksgiving, so it was a pleasure to receive eight well-written, carefully thought out letters of appreciation. The topic was well tackled by all entrants and each letter evoked a different response. This was particularly noticeable in Pam Driver’s letter. Her well-chosen words not only introduced her sister, but they also touched my heart deeply and drew a few tears. By the end of her letter, I felt that I really knew the personality of her ‘Big Sissy’.*

*I awarded First Place to Pam Driver for her excellent letter, and Second Place Equal to Ruth Jamieson and Christine Platt. Ruth’s letter gave a modern-day twist to the story of Naomi and Ruth, and Christine Platt wrote an excellent letter of encouragement to her niece. Third Place went to Jill Clarke who wrote a thought-provoking letter of her journey as a child adjusting to her new mother.*

*While each letter is well-written, there are a few areas that need to be addressed. A common mistake some entrants made was to give a title to their letter (e.g. Letter of Appreciation). This is not required when writing a personal letter to a friend or relative. A letter is a letter, not a story or article with a heading.*



*When writing a letter, it is also necessary to include the name (or title) of the person you are writing to and the name of the person it is from. Just putting 'Dear' at the beginning of a letter and omitting to include the sender's name at the end can cause the content to seem cold and impersonal.*

*Some entrants who quoted directly from the Bible omitted to include the version of the Bible they were quoting from with the reference. The reference and version abbreviation should also be in brackets OR separated from the quote by a long dash which serves as a parenthesis. Do also note that the modern way of writing a Bible reference is to use a colon to separate chapter from verse rather than a v (e.g. Proverbs 25:11 NKJV).*

*Remember, too, that patented names (such as the boardgame Scrabble) should begin with a capital letter, not a small letter.*

## First Place



Pam  
Driver  
of Auckland  
South

## Your Deeds Follow You

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### My Dearest Big Sissy

I said “thank you”, but not often enough. I said “I love you”, but oh for one more time. Thank you for intently listening during our long phone conversations, and for sharing your wisdom and encouragement. You were my confidante.

Thank you for sharing your enjoyment of good food. Your cooking was legend. Thank you for inviting the ‘waifs and strays’ to regularly sup at your table. Thank you for your ability to make everyone feel special.

Thank you for loving Jesus so much, and for living that love. ‘Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God’ (1 John 4:7). Thank you for your sacrificial spirit. Five times you flew from Australia to support me through surgeries, even though the last time meant 14 days in stifling managed isolation, where you said the room was comfortable but the food was atrocious!

Thank you for being joyful, generous and proactive. You were always warm and loyal, but boy you were competitive at scrabble. Thank you for the times we laughed so hard our sides ached. My beloved sissy, yours was a life well-lived and ‘your deeds follow you’ (Revelation 14:13).

Thank you

Your Little Sissy

## Second Place Equal



Ruth  
Jamieson  
of Whakatane

### My Dearest Rose

My dearest Rose

'The Lord bless you, my daughter.' (Ruth 3 v 10 NIV) Over this past year you have been as a daughter to me, while I feel I have failed miserably as your mother-in-law and as God's representative to you.

Yesterday as I held your new-born son, God spoke to my heart. I realised I had been holding onto the bitterness of grief, and had blamed Him for taking my husband and two sons. I asked His forgiveness and am now at peace.

Rose, you have been so selfless, sacrificing your future in leaving your homeland, your family and your culture to come to live with me and my people.

I know Kent loved you and with his passing you have shared in my sorrow and heartache. What a great comfort you have been to me. Now God has blessed you with a wonderful God-fearing husband and baby Owen.

This morning when you asked me to be involved in Owen's upbringing, I was overwhelmed.

I feel so blessed and thank God for you and Ben.

'May you be richly rewarded by the Lord under whose wings you have come to take refuge.' (Ruth 2 v 12 NIV)

With all my love

Nancy

## Second Place Equal



Christine  
Platt  
of Red Beach,  
Auckland

### Letter of Appreciation

Dear

I'm so proud to be your great-aunt. Listening to you speak at your grandfather's celebration of life service showed me what a kind, thoughtful and delightful young woman you have grown into.

Your grandfather wasn't always the easiest man to relate to, but you shared your thoughts with tact and discernment. I'm sure your message warmed my sister's heart as she said her final goodbye to her spouse of 60 years.

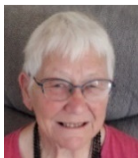
I particularly appreciated the way you illustrated his sense of fun when you spoke about the two of you playing with his model railway in years gone by.

Words are powerful and you chose your words carefully. What came to my mind was a verse from the Bible: *"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver."* (Proverbs 25:11 NKJV). You truly honoured your grandfather with words that enhanced his memory in the minds of all who listened. That is a precious gift you have given to him and to all those who are mourning.

Thank you so much. May God give you many more opportunities to use words to encourage and comfort others.

With much love

## Third Place



Jill  
Clarke  
of Wanganui

## Thanks and Appreciation

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Dear Mum

Thank you for taking on five of us when we needed a new mother. You kept us together as a family.

I didn't understand how difficult it must have been for you, previously a single woman, to love us as your own. I missed my Mummy, but you helped me know she would be waiting for me in the place Jesus has prepared for us. **John 14:2,3**

When necessary, you corrected us and set us on a right path to good citizenship. None of us has been involved in any unlawful activity or disgraced you and Dad. **Proverbs 22:6**

A reluctant participant in household chores I now enjoy these skills. Instruction in daily living tasks means each of us has a tidy, healthy home for family to return to. Visitors are always welcome.

You and Dad encouraged our faith to grow to mature Christianity. I didn't always appreciate regular attendance at Sunday School and services when my friends were having fun. Now I can see where the foundations of my faith were set firmly on God and His Word. **Luke 6:47,48**

Thank you Mum. I love you.

Jill

# Level Three

## Judge: Julia Martin

**Requirement:** Précis writing is an important skill for writers, enabling them to reduce the length of their work and avoid verbosity. Write a précis of Genesis 22:1-14 in 150 words maximum, making sure you retain accuracy and the essential details.

### General Comments

*A précis (French for 'precise') is a miniature version of an original article, speech or text that retains the essential points, mood and tone of the piece.*

*The condensed version is marked by conciseness, clarity, brevity and completeness.*

*All non-essential details and expressions are left out.*

*So often writers exceed the required word count or time limit and are required to reduce the length of their work. This involves editing and it can be frustrating and tiresome, but generally the finest writers tend to do the most editing.*

*Précis writing is a skill that enables writers to express their thoughts and ideas clearly, concisely and in a logical manner.*

### Writing a précis

- 1. Read the article several times.*
- 2. Write down the core details.*
- 3. Make a rough copy.*
- 4. Use simple, shorter words where possible.*
- 5. Remove overused words and repeated nouns and pronouns.*
- 6. Replace direct speech with indirect speech.*
- 7. Avoid using contractions and abbreviations.*
- 8. Write in the third person.*
- 9. Use the past tense.*
- 10. Give the piece a suitable title.*

*The assignment for this competition involved cutting down and condensing a well-known Bible story told in about 400 words to 150 words maximum without losing the main details and significance of the story. I used the above ten points as criteria for judging the seven excellent entries received.*

*In most cases these points were followed and all the entries kept to the 150 word limit which was not easy. All the entrants managed to identify the key details of the story and then assemble them into a brief summary while still retaining accuracy and the significance of the story.*

*The one area that several entrants missed was the need to remove direct speech and replace it with indirect speech. Research on the topic of writing a précis would have revealed this.*

*eg. Verse 7: (Direct speech) 'The fire and wood are here,' Isaac said, 'but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?'*

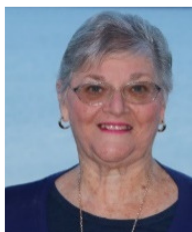
*(Indirect speech). Isaac questioned his father about the absence of a lamb which was required for the burnt offering.*

*I awarded first place to Jean Crane who managed to write her précis in 108 words. At first I felt she had restricted her summary by not using the full word allowance, but she skilfully managed to select the main facts of the story and wrote her short précis in a clear and concise manner without losing the implication of the story.*

*Second place goes to Pauline Marshall and third place to Ella Hamlin. The remaining contestants wrote excellent short versions of the story but were marked down for including direct speech.*

*It always pays to research a topic if it's something you are not familiar with.*

## First Place



Jean  
Crane  
of Tauranga

## Abraham Tested

To test Abraham's faith, God asked him to sacrifice his only son Isaac.

As Abraham travelled to Moriah his son asked about the lamb and was told God would provide one.

God guided Abraham to a mountain where Isaac was laid on an altar as the sacrificial lamb.

When Abraham picked up his knife to slay Isaac, the Angel of the Lord told him not to harm the boy as Abraham had shown he feared God by his willingness to give up his only son.

In place of Isaac, Abraham sacrificed a ram found caught in a bush, and named the place, 'The Lord Will Provide.'

## Second Place



Pauline  
Marshall  
of Christchurch

### The Ultimate Test

God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to take his beloved only son Isaac to Mount Moriah and offer him as a burnt offering. They set off early the next morning. Two servants accompanied them for two days, then Abraham told them to wait, assuring them that they would both return.

They continued on, Isaac carrying the wood, and Abraham the fire and knife. On the way Isaac questioned his father about the absence of a lamb, but Abraham assured him that God would provide one.

Arriving at the place God had indicated, they built an altar. Abraham bound his son on top of it and raised the knife to kill him. Suddenly God called to him to stop, saying that Abraham had proven his faith was great. Immediately Abraham noticed a ram caught in a bush, so he sacrificed it instead. He named the place 'The Lord Will Provide.'

## Third Place



Ella  
Hamlin  
of Napier

### Famous Faith

God invited Abraham into a test, which he accepted without hesitation.

Isaac, his only beloved son, was to be sacrificed as a burnt offering. With two servants, and a donkey loaded with wood, they all journeyed three days to mount Moriah.

Abraham told his servants to stay with the donkey while he and Isaac went to worship, confident they would return.

Abraham took wood, fire, and the knife. Along the way, Isaac asked about the lamb required for the offering. Abraham knew God would provide the sacrifice. He built the altar and arranged the wood. He was ready to slay his bound son, when the Lord's angel intervened, with instructions not to harm Isaac.

Not withholding his only son, was proof that Abraham feared God. Isaac was replaced by a ram, found trapped in a nearby thicket.

It is now known, that on the mountain the LORD will always provide.



# Competitions for August 2022

Due by July 1<sup>st</sup> 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](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 a story similar to an Aesop's fable on the topic of 'Daring to be Different'. Your story must contain only two characters who can be either animals or people. The moral of your story should also be based on Christian principles and be clearly conveyed to your reader in the final sentence. (400 words maximum)

**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 description about an unusual experience you had during a lockdown. (350 words)

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



*Lesley*

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

**Requirement:** Imagine you are a creature living in the zoo. Describe a typical day in your life. This can be serious or funny. (250 words)

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



*Julia*



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

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