

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2023

# THE CHRISTIAN Writer

## SEE INSIDE FOR

### Articles:

*Tauranga Writers Group Publishes Anthology* by Ruth Linton

*Daystar Books Closing its Doors* by George Bryant

### Short Story:

*The Promise* by John Lindsay

### Poetry by:

Geraldine Crow

Anna Verhaegh

### Book Reviews:

*Moana You are Valued, Ollie the Gift, Samuel a Call to Destiny* by Maree Baigent Harris

*I'm Not Nobody* by Anna Verhaegh

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)

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

For magazine contributions, address changes, membership queries.

**Treasurer:** For subscriptions, donations: [treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org)

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

1) Digital magazine: Full membership \$40 / Student membership (up to 25yrs) \$20

2) Printed magazine: Full membership \$55 / Student membership (up to 25yrs) \$35

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

© Copyright 2023

This issue printed locally by

**BookPrint.**  
Making Bookshop Quality Easy

Contact David at  
[hello@bookprint.co.nz](mailto:hello@bookprint.co.nz)  
09 443 1775  
[www.bookprint.co.nz](http://www.bookprint.co.nz)

# The Christian Writer

Feb – Mar 2023

ISSN 2537-8708 (Online)

VOL 40. No 1

ISSN 1171-0098 (Print)

## Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor   Membership Secretary   Book Review Requests
Page 4	President's Report – Justin St Vincent
Page 5	Editorial: A Subtle Enemy – Kathryn Paul
Page 6	Notices
Page 7	Tauranga Writers Group Publishes Anthology – Ruth Linton
Page 8	The Promise – Short Story by John Lindsay
Page 10	What is Poetry? (Part One) – Ruth Linton
Page 12	Mini Biography Introducing Debbie McDermott
Page 13	Northland Christian Writers Retreat Day Out – Kathryn Paul
Page 16	Book Reviews: <i>Moana You are Valued</i> , <i>Ollie the Gift</i> , <i>Samuel a Call to Destiny</i> by Maree Baigent Harris – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 16	Book Review: <i>I'm Not Nobody</i> by Anna Verhaegh – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 17	Daystar Books Closing its Doors – George Bryant
Page 19	Professional Writing Services – Free Advertising for Members
Page 21	Camp Fire – poem by Geraldine Crow
Page 21	Going Home – poem by Anna Verhaegh
Page 21	Book Launch – <i>For Life</i> – a tribute to Janice Gillgren
Page 22	Tips From an Editor – Janette Busch
Page 23	Find a Local Writers Group / Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 24	Writing Competitions Points Board

## CW Competitions

Page 25	Level One Results	Page 34	Level Three Results
Page 30	Level Two Results	Page 39	Competitions for April 2023

**Website:** Our user-friendly website is full of helpful information, such as details of seminars and copies of past magazines. It gives each member an online presence. Feel free to share our website link with other Christian writers so they can join us. Our members are the best advocates for growing our collective of NZ Christian Writers.

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

# President's Report



Here at NZ Christian Writers we trust you are having a fantastic start to your 2023! Perhaps this is the year you'll be pursuing your passion for writing by taking your writing project to the next level.

I commend all our members who have made a decision to publish or even self-publish their creative writing this year. Publishing your writing online via a blog or website offers a greater opportunity to build a digital audience. Those who decide to take the more traditional publishing route of putting their manuscript to print will find that self-publishing is more accessible and easier now than it's ever been.

For our readers, this magazine includes contact details to locate editors, proofreaders and publishers who can help serve you on your publishing journey. For those who prefer to write more casually, whether it is writing fiction, non-fiction, poetry, or even songwriting, I pray and trust that God will continue to guide you.

NZ Christian Writers' 40th Anniversary Retreat at Flaxmill, Whitianga is almost full. We are enthused for a blessed time altogether as we celebrate this special season for NZCW. Our Retreats also provide a unique time of making new friends and reconnecting with other members from our collective. Shared house accommodation is still available for those who would like to book their place now. This is essentially the 'last call' before all places fill-up prior to April 2023. To secure your place, simply register and pay online via our Retreat 2023 weblink:

[www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2023/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2023/)

Recently I've been inspired by the power of stories. I've shared in our *Young Christian Writer* magazine how stories cultivate curiosity, encourage exploration, reveal timeless truths and more. I believe stories become a connective tissue between cultures, experiences, people and time. Ultimately, Jesus' story of His miraculous birth, sinless life, atoning death and bodily resurrection is the most life-changing story of all. Stories really do change the world.

Once again congratulations to this magazine's featured photographer, Max Carr, who has contributed the photo you see on this edition's front cover. Thanks again to our editor, Kathryn, and all our members at NZ Christian Writers who make *The Christian Writer* magazine possible. With your competition entries, contributions, reviews and support we are able to co-create and publish this magazine for all members of our collective. Write on.

Kia Manaakitia – be blessed.

Justin St Vincent



# Editorial: A Subtle Enemy

by Kathryn Paul



One risk of working with an older computer is you never know if or when it will suddenly die. I thought I was safe with my all-in-one touchscreen desktop. After all, it still looked as modern as the ones for sale in the stores. It was advanced enough and had plenty of storage. However, this past year it has occasionally been having strange and annoying glitches. A lot of my content was automatically being saved online by OneDrive but I also took the time to save onto a memory stick the content which was only stored on my hard drive, just in case. It was one of those tasks I procrastinate over, thinking, 'Surely not. Yeah, when I get around to it, she'll be right. Nah, it won't happen to me.'

On Tuesday 10 January it was raining. I was wrestling with the temptation to procrastinate and delay working on this magazine. But I don't like to let our readers down so I dutifully turned on my PC and everything began as it normally does. Suddenly, the screen went black. It wouldn't turn back on. Long story short it turned out my PC had a problem with the motherboard and at eight to nine years old was out of date enough for parts to no longer be available!

I live rural so replacing my PC at short notice became a time-consuming task. This irritated me sorely because it was using up my magazine production time. A small comfort was the thought I reminded myself with that at least I hadn't procrastinated and put off the work before this problem occurred. Otherwise the delay would have been more catastrophic than it already was.

Procrastination is like an invisible thief that can rob writers of the productivity we desire. It's important to ask ourselves: *What is causing me to put off writing?* Or it may be that you are putting off saving backups of those important files on your PC. Perhaps you are putting off doing your office work or something else.

We don't see the cost of procrastination at the time we make the decision to put something off. We are very likely to experience the consequences later on and feel the regret when it's too late. Diligence in following the 'do it now if you can' mindset is a habit that can reap many unexpected rewards. Being diligent in the small things can make a big difference to someone or something in the future.

Procrastination is a subtle enemy and I encourage us all to make 2023 the year we can say we evicted that enemy out of our daily lives. Let's celebrate each time we choose not to procrastinate. It's an important achievement every day.

With love in Jesus,  
from Kathryn.

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

# Notices

## Our 40th Anniversary Retreat!!



### **Book now for our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Writers Retreat 2023!**

Accommodation is quality shared houses with bedding provided and the Retreat is fully catered. Be sure to secure your room today, visit [www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat)

### **Writers Group Leaders Wanted**

If you are willing to host a writers group please get in touch. To find out more details email Justin at [president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@nzchristianwriters.org) or Kathryn at [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)

### **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**

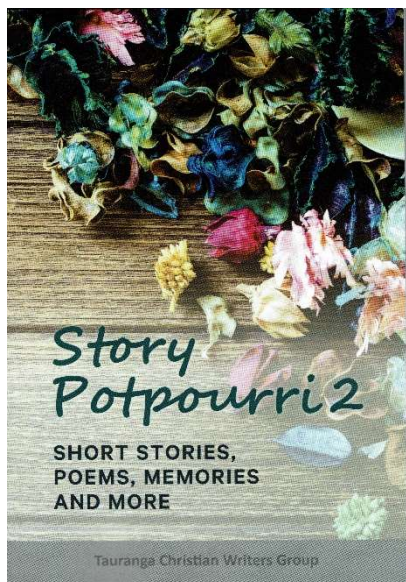
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/newzealandchristianwriters>

### **Submissions Wanted**

More content is always needed for our magazines, *The Christian Writer* and *Young Christian Writer*. Send in your contributions by email to [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)

### **South Island Christian Book Authors Network**

The next meeting will be Saturday 11 February 2023. Meetings are quarterly and are specifically offered for those interested in writing a book or who have published a book. Facilitators are Verna McFelin [verna.mcfelin@gmail.com](mailto:verna.mcfelin@gmail.com) and Christine Nathan [chris@teamnathan.co](mailto:chris@teamnathan.co)



# Tauranga Writers Group Publishes Anthology

By Ruth Linton

December 22, 2022 was an exciting day for the Tauranga Christian Writers Group. We collected our second anthology of group writing from the printers, Pure Print, Tauranga. Aptly named Pot Pourri 2 it carries on the tradition of the first Pot Pourri, published in January 2017. The first anthology was 80 x A5 pages long; the second is 104. We were able again to include several colour illustrations.

As with the first collection we are aiming to give at least one copy to every Retirement

Village/Rest Home in the Bay of Plenty area and are also encouraging group members to give them to people with whom they wish to share their faith. (Already Cathy has sold two and Jean's friend has purchased four before they were even published!) Most of the stories, poetry and memoirs are just reflections of a clean-living style but as the anthology progresses more of our personal faith is presented in a gentle, fresh, appealing way.

Although it was member Carol Graham who again stirred us to consider another anthology, the group took up the vision enthusiastically and quickly began contributing items. At each monthly meeting the group worked on proofreading and editing the different contribution before they were again stored in a central place.

Towards the end of the year group member Cathy Harris (using her advanced Publisher Programme and computer abilities) paged the anthology up and inserted the pictures and graphics. She was admirably and willingly helped by Denise James, Elaine Dixon, Carol Graham and, especially in the last stages, Jenny Balmer. It was wonderful to have willing and experienced group members (and their associated families who shared their areas of expertise) all working together.

The basic cover design was done by Pure Print because of the need to produce a 'bleed' to ensure the whole cover and spine are coloured. We cannot speak highly enough of the cooperation of the company in the project.

If anyone would like a copy of this anthology they can be purchased for \$15 each, plus postage, (\$4.50) by contacting Ruth Linton, Ph: 021 408 661, email: [ruthlinton2015@gmail.com](mailto:ruthlinton2015@gmail.com).

# The Promise

## Short Story by John Lindsay

Jenny checked the cupboard again, with the same result. One can of baked beans. At least that solved the question of what to have for dinner.

She knew there would be another payment in her account tomorrow but she was tired of trying to make the money stretch through two weeks of rent, food and other expenses. Nothing extravagant. Barely the necessities for a mother and son.

Seven-year-old Brian was a good kid. He rarely complained or asked for something they could not afford.

As she took the can from the cupboard, Brian came into the room.

"Do we have any paper, Mum?"

"Only the rejects from the copy centre. Mr Mason said the blank side is still good for drawing and writing."

"I want to draw a house. The one I'm going to build for us one day."

"You're going to build a house for us?"

"Yes. What colour do you want the front door?"

"Umm. Blue would be nice."

"Okay, blue. And how many bedrooms?"

"Two. One for you and one for me."

"Don't you like sharing with me?"

"I love having you close, but when you're older you'll want your own room."

Brian spent all evening working on his picture, writing 'blue' on the front door because his only pencil was black. When it was finished they clipped it to the curtain with a clothes peg.

Jenny smiled every time she looked at the picture. They had been forced to shift so often she had given up any hope of a house for herself, but Brian could have his dreams. She had learned long ago there was no point getting too settled.

Because the owner wanted to redevelop the site, they were soon on the move again. This time to an old villa, where their downstairs one-bedroom flat looked better after a good clean. Jenny's display of cheap ornaments added a familiar touch, but she couldn't find the drawing of the house. She hoped Brian would not notice it was missing and was relieved when he said nothing.

Brian was never a top-of-the-class student but as the years passed his teachers seemed pleased with his progress and several said he never seemed happier than when he was drawing.



Jenny often wondered where her son's talents would take him and she caught a glimpse the day he came in holding an envelope, a big grin on his face.

"I've passed, Mum."

"Your Architectural Design Diploma?"

"Yes, and I've been offered a job with a housing development company."

"That's wonderful."

Clients and competitors soon recognised Brian's work, based on his natural talent which became refined by training and experience. With the promise of even more opportunities he eventually set up his own business.

Jenny watched his success with a happy heart, relieved that he was achieving so much despite his difficult childhood.

As Brian picked up more contracts his mother often saw his name on construction sites. One in particular caught her eye. Among a group of individual two-bedroom units nearing completion was one with a blue door.

"I saw that new development on Rose Street today," she said to him that evening. "Looks like they're nearly finished."

"Yes, by the end of next week. Would you like to have a look inside before the owners move in?"

"Would that be all right?"

"Of course, it's my project. We'll go two weeks today."

As they walked up the path to the freshly finished homes, Brian's voice broke into her memories of tiny flats and damp houses. "What do you think, Mum?"

"For a start, I like the blue door."

"Then come inside. Have a look around."

"It's lovely. Whoever lives here is going to be so happy."

"Could you live here?"

"Me? Oh, you know I gave up the idea of having my own home a long time ago. But yes, this has all I've ever dreamed of."

"Check the cupboards."

"There's a piece of paper in this one."

"Shouldn't be anything in the cupboards. What's on the paper?"

"Brian, this is your drawing! The house with the blue door. I thought we'd lost it years ago in one of our moves."

"I took it and kept it to remind me of the promise, Mum. This is your house."

# What is Poetry? (Part One)

by Ruth Linton

There are many forms of writing but most people separate the written word into two main groups, prose and poetry. So, what is poetry? And, by elimination, what is prose? The *Pocket Oxford Dictionary* defines poetry as: *The art or work of a poet; poetic or tenderly pleasing quality.* A very scholarly answer, I am sure, but not very helpful. Here is a quote from an ex-member, now with the Lord:

*Poetry expresses emotion, observation and conviction in such a way that it penetrates the heart of the reader... Writing poetry requires a vital interest in words, an instinctive desire to arrange them in original ways, relate a sense of wonder, capture a bit of mystery... Poetry must have content-worthy content, for as Christians we have the epitome of worth to write about. Poetry must have beauty of expression, if nothing else. Poetry must have craftsmanship—gold is refined, rough stones are polished. Poetry must have originality. A poem may be perfect in structure, correct in doctrine, but quite unexciting because it is ordinary. {1}*

Most people would define a poem as something set out in a format of short lines and containing clear rhythm and rhyme. This is a useful idea but not fully correct today. (Though it certainly was in my secondary school days 50 years ago!) Famous poets of the 1800s included names like Wordsworth, Browning and Tennyson who wrote in rhymed and rhymed formats, usually on beautiful or solemnly melancholy topics. Normally the rhythm and rhyming pattern were consistent throughout the poem but works such as Robert Browning's *Pied Piper of Hamelin* varied the rhythm to match the mood:

*Rats!*  
*They fought the dogs and killed the cats,*  
*And bit the babies in the cradles*  
*And ate the cheeses out of the vats,*  
*And licked the soup from the cook's own ladles*  
*Split open the kegs of salted sprats,*  
*Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,*  
*And even spoiled the women's chats*  
*By drowning their speaking*  
*With shrieking and squeaking*  
*In fifty different sharps and flats.*

Compare this to the rhythm later in the poem as the Piper steps out with quiet confidence to get rid of the rats:

*Into the street the piper stept,*  
*Smiling at first a little smile,*  
*As if he knew what magic slept*  
*In his quiet pipe the while...*

Over recent years there has been a trend away from the regular and ordered form of poetry. This may be a reflection of the search for so-called 'freedom' seen also in public policies and politics. However, there have always been other forms of verse some of which produced poetry of beauty, deep thought and life philosophy. Rhythm and rhyme may no longer be essential for poetry of value. Nevertheless, these more recent forms still have some things in common:

- Traditional-type verses with regular rhythm and rhyme continue and delight the audience because of their rhythm and predictable structure. These also cross over into musical lyrics with ease.
- **Blank verse** is usually written in verse or stanza form. It seldom has end-of-line rhymes but must have a firm rhythm, usually iambic pentameter (dee DUM, dee DUM pattern five times in each line). This rhythmic pattern draws the listener in through the almost-musical quality of the verse. Generally, it is used for noble themes and dramatic monologues. Although it appears to be more common in modern times it is by no means a recent development. Many of Shakespeare's plays were in blank verse:

*The quality of mercy is not strained.  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed:  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.  
It is mightiest in the mightiest. It becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown.  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty  
Wherein doth lie the dread and fear of kings,  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings..  
It is an attribute to God himself... {2}*

By contrast to Blank Verse, **Free Verse** is just that. It is free from conventions of poetry, the need for rhythm or rhyme or punctuation and generally is not used for majestic themes but more for the common, even unwholesome or frustrating things of life. Line length, paragraphs and punctuation are up to the poet and may not be used at all.

Other structured, sometimes rhythmic forms of poetry, include **Cinquain**, **Haiku** (Both Japanese in origin), **Hebrew Couplets** (as in Proverbs in the Bible), **shape poems**, **acrostics** (Psalm 119) and **limericks**. If writing in any of these forms it is good to research them first and the internet or the local library are good places to find examples and information on how to write these forms.

{1} Quoted in *You Can Write Poetry No 8*, by Bill Hawthornthwaite, *The Christian Writer*, Vol 8 No 5, June 1991

{2} From *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare

## Mini-Biography

### Introducing Level One Judge and Competition Coordinator, Debbie McDermott

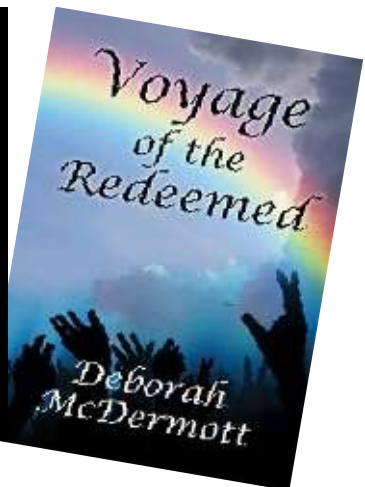


It was no accident that I began life with the surname Speller. I've always had a love for writing and a desire to become an author. Little did I realise this would become a reality thousands of kilometres away from the land I once called home.

Hello, I'm Debbie McDermott. I was born in Zimbabwe, became a Christian in my early 20s, met and married my husband Sean in my 30s, had two children (Daniel and Peter), and migrated to New Zealand in 2006 when it became too difficult to continue living in our economically bankrupt country. That was over 16 years ago now and I became a New Zealand Citizen in 2012.

When we arrived in New Zealand, Sean insisted I fulfil my dream of writing a book. It was this manuscript and the hosting of a writers workshop by renowned author, Elizabeth Sherrill, that prompted me to join NZ Christian Writers in 2008. This was the best decision I've ever made in terms of my writing career. Entering the level one, two and three writing competitions was particularly helpful as it grew me from a mediocre writer into a good writer. I have also had the privilege of holding various positions in NZCW, including being a previous board member, magazine editor and librarian; level one judge since 2010; and magazine proofreader and competition coordinator since 2018.

In 2010, I published my first book, *Voyage of the Redeemed* (which I dedicated to my late husband), and my second book, *And the Lion Roared No More* in 2018—just before I moved from Waiuku in South Auckland to my present home in the lovely Havelock North, Hawkes Bay.





# Northland Christian Writers Retreat Day Out

by Kathryn Paul

Northland Christian Writers had a fun day out on December 4<sup>th</sup> 2022 at Tarai Station. We boarded into two Polaris Rangers and toured the beautiful Tarai Station, which is a 5000acre farm located between Whangarei and Kaikohe. Our tour guides, Geraldine and Fenton Craw, took us up to the Station's waterfall and then to a lovely picnic spot called Totara Grove.

Those who wanted to, were able to swim in the fresh water river and later we shared some of our poetry and stories. The photos tell the story of our day!







The all-terrain vehicles took us almost to the bottom of the waterfall. We only needed to walk a short distance to get close to the water. I loved the big wooden table set in the pasture ready for a picnic. Jayne King enjoyed the natural seat of a fallen tree while I took a dip in the water below.

Some sat for a while in a pleasant 'writers huddle' enjoying the beauty of God's creation.





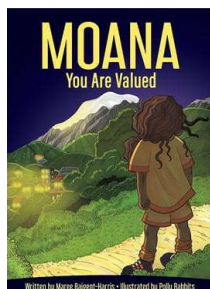


Totara Grove has cabins, a picnic table, a camp fire and a river to swim in. Our day was a lovely adventure and summer treat. We look forward to next time!

*Young Christian Writer* magazine is out now! Sign up for a **FREE** digital subscription today! (Note this special offer doesn't include *The Christian Writer*.) Click here to sign up to *Young Christian Writer*: <http://eepurl.com/hSQOhX>



## Book Reviews



### Moana You are Valued

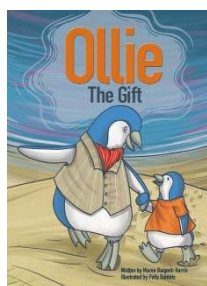
By Maree Baigent Harris

Review by Julia Martin

Published by The CopyPress

Set in New Zealand, these three books Maree has written for children and parents are fun to read, but her intention for writing them is more profound than entertainment alone. From her experience working for a medical initiative in low decile primary schools where children are often disadvantaged in various ways, Maree seeks to encourage parents and whanau to recognize the fact that every child has a value and purpose. Each book has a separate theme and intention.

*Moana You are Valued* (2020) deals with the age-old problem of bullying. Moana runs away to hide after an embarrassing incident that causes her ridicule and shame. Lost, lonely, and afraid, she is desperate for friendship and acceptance. The story opens up the opportunity for discussion about kindness, forgiveness, and treating others how we'd like to be treated.

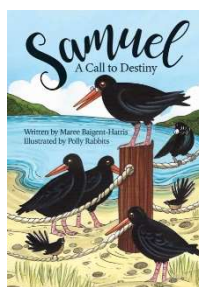


*Ollie The Gift* (2021) deals with the subject of autism told through a family of cute penguins. Ollie is 'neuro-diverse' and he functions and learns differently from his siblings. He's regarded as a very special gift by his

loving and caring family who marvel at the way his mind works and the complexity of his imagination.

*Samuel A Call to Destiny* (2021) traces the development of an Oystercatcher from his life inside the egg where he is nurtured and protected

## Book Reviews

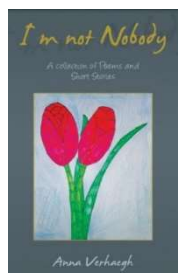


by his loving parents to his hatching and gradual development into an independent adult bird with his own family and destiny.

In summary Maree writes: 'the thread of these books has the underlying theme that a child's life is of value

and full of purpose. Every child has been custom-designed uniquely with special gifts and talents. They are part of an intrinsic plan. They are not a mistake, they are an important part in the puzzle of humanity. Without their contribution, a huge hole would be left in society and family life.'

The three books are superbly illustrated in vibrant colours by Polly Rabbit of Nelson. I strongly recommend these books and hope Maree continues to use her writing talent to produce more books of this calibre.



### I'm Not Nobody

By Anna Verhaegh

Review by Julia Martin

Self Published

Anna's anthology contains an interesting collection of her poems and short stories – some of which have been entries in various competitions. Her collection covers a wide range of diverse subjects including nature and the seasons, health issues, doubts and fears, death, the impact of the pandemic, her relationships with others, and the struggle and challenges of her Christian faith.

She's a talented young writer who is capable of expressing her deep thoughts and feelings. I'm pleased she has managed to self-publish her works in this first edition so many other readers can enjoy them. One of her poems is on page 22.

# DayStar Books Closing Its Doors

by George Bryant

Christian publishing company, DayStar Books Ltd, will finish publishing at the end of March 2023.

A big thank you to everyone who has supported us over the past thirteen years. We've had a great time, gained a lot of experience and published some important books.

Established in 2010 by Julie Belding and George Bryant as a not-for-profit publishing company DayStar has produced 50 volumes for New Zealand authors. Julie had been the editor of the DayStar evangelical magazine and George its last chairman.

"We had clear aims," said George. "We wanted to publish wholesome books that inspired and gave hope, books that influenced people and society in a positive way. We also wanted to publish New Zealand authors whose books might not have otherwise seen the light of day. We've done that."

Initially, DayStar's publications were mainly for the Christian market but a style and format gradually developed aimed at reaching a wider market, both strengthening the dedicated Christian and challenging the non-believer.

Apart from Julie and George others who served on the Board were Debbie McDermott, Jan Pendergrast, Bernard Yeo, Jeanette Knudsen, Ruth Linton and Christel Jeffs.

George will continue to help and advise writers where needed, on matters of writing, editing, publishing and marketing.

Over the years Julie has edited many books, the *NZ Baptist* and *DayStar* magazine. In 2016 The Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) gave her the Gutenberg award for her services to journalism and to the association.

George has written 24 books and as many booklets and edited many volumes. In 2019 he was awarded the QSM for his work in writing, publishing and community work. Check his website: [www.georgebryant.co.nz](http://www.georgebryant.co.nz). He is on Facebook and Wikipedia.

## MEGA SALE!

Copies of the following titles are still available at **ONLY the cost of freight/postage**. Check them out now on [www.daystarbooks.org](http://www.daystarbooks.org). Contact George: [bryantgw@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bryantgw@xtra.co.nz)

*Agents of Change* (biographies of Christian movers and shakers) – George Bryant

*And the Lion Roared No More* (historical novel about the rise and fall of the king of Babylon) – Debbie McDermott

*A Skylark Flies* (novel about forgiveness) – Robyn Cotton

*Big Questions* (24-page booklets) – George Bryant 1. *Why are We Here?* 2. *The Meaning of Life* 3. *Where Are We Going?*

*Breakthrough :Freed from Anxiety* – Carol Chessum

*Coping with Dying* – George Seber

*Finding the Forgotten God* – Ron Hay

*Four Kiwis on the Silk Road* – Jeanette Knudsen

*Frank Speaking* (biography) – Frank Leadley

*Free to be Me* (autobiography) – Joan Bryant

*From Despair to Hope* (biography) – Sarah-Jane Maguire

*George* (autobiography) – George Bryant

*Glimpses of Hope in East Timor* – Christine Platt

*Heart Attack : lessons from a near-death experience* – Stephen Whitwell

*Healthy Living* (booklet) – Frank Rigg

*I've Fallen in Love* (biography) – Ruth Corbett

*Is Marriage for Me* – June Dooney

*Journey in Wonder: Slices of Abundant Life* – Wayne Graham

*Letters in a Different War* (conscientious objection in WW2) – Joan Braddock

*Life Is...*(What's life on Earth really like?) – George Bryant

*Loving Life* – John Sturt

*Mary and Me* (novel about Parkinson's disease) – Robyn Cotton

*Mission to the Ends of the Earth* – Russell Smith

*My First 80 Years* – Fred Barrett

*Millennium 3* (Unresolved NZ social issues) – George Bryant

*My Writing Journey* – George Bryant

*New Zealand 2050* – George Bryant

*New Zealand Without God?* – George Bryant

*Rubble to Resurrection* (the churches' involvement in the Christchurch earthquakes) – Melissa Parsons

*Saving Grace* (autobiography) – Maree Hyde

*Teaching Hundreds to Heal Millions* (story of Beryl Howie) – Bartha Hill

*The Invisible Caravan* (a teenage fantasy) – Janet Pointon

*Trial to Triumph: inspiring stories of overcomers* – George Bryant

*Writing to Make a Difference* (booklet) – George Bryant

Plus two more of George's books: *Birthright: a story of people who care* (Dunmore Press), and *Pathways of Hope*, the story of World Vision (Dunmore Press).



# Professional Writing Services

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

## ASTUTE EDITING

### Candice Hume

E: [info@astuteediting.co.nz](mailto:info@astuteediting.co.nz)

## A WORD ABOUT EDITING

I am a freelance editor having received a Diploma of Proofreading and Editing from NZIBS in 2012. I have edited a large range of documents including novels, biographies, magazine articles, websites, and university assignments.

In August 1968, while beginning teacher training, Jesus Christ changed my heart and the whole direction of my life. I am passionate about working with Christian writers, helping them polish their work until it shines.

I endeavour to read the writer's intentions, not just their words, helping them shape their writing into a more accurate, natural and pleasing form.

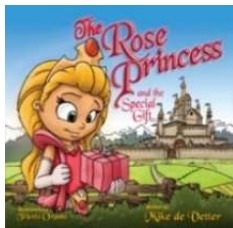
**Graham Pedersen:** 027 440 5851

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

## BOOK ILLUSTRATOR

Travis Orams is an experienced children's book illustrator. He recently illustrated *The Rose Princess and the Special Gift* by Pastor Mike de Vetter, and *Brooklyn Builds a Bridge* by Stacey Mareroa-Roberts. If you have wonderful worlds and characters you want illustrated, Travis would love to hear from you.

Visit [www.travisorams.art](http://www.travisorams.art)



## CASTLE PUBLISHING

Christian and Family publishing services in New Zealand.

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

## CAVIT ENTERPRISES

Proofreading and Copyediting Services

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

Most genres considered.

Fees to fit your budget.

**Brian Cavit** Dip Edit

E: [cavitent@gmail.com](mailto:cavitent@gmail.com)

## CHRISTIAN EDITING

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

I hold a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in marketing and have over twenty years' experience in human resources, including writing and editing a company newsletter, developing a government website, contributing to a textbook, and writing and proofreading more client reports than I can count.

I specialise in editing Christian fiction and advising pre-published and self-published authors on the business side of writing, publishing and marketing. Find out more at <https://christianediting.co.nz/resources/> or <https://christianediting.co.nz/blog/> and sign up for a free two-week course on revising and self-editing your novel.

**Iola Goulton**

E: [igoulton@christianediting.co.nz](mailto:igoulton@christianediting.co.nz)

## WILD SIDE PUBLISHING

### Demystifying the self-publishing process

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

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

Visit [www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published/#publish](http://www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published/#publish) or [print](http://www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published/#print) and download the free guide to self-publishing.

**Ray Curle:** 09 439 5717

E: [ray@thewildside.net](mailto:ray@thewildside.net)

## WORDWYZE PUBLISHING

### Assisting Authors to Self-Publish

Services Offered:

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

**Colleen Kaluza:**

E: [colleen@wordwyze.nz](mailto:colleen@wordwyze.nz)

Visit <http://wordwyze.nz>

## WRITING ANSWERS

I have over 20 years of experience as a copy editor and proofreader. 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 proofreading, 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)

## FEATHERSTON BOOKTOWN FESTIVAL MAY 10-14 2023

Attention authors who are interested in attending the NZ Booktown festival and sharing a stall with NZ Christian Writers.

This is a marketing opportunity to create exposure for your published work and to promote Christian writing.

Please contact Kathryn for more details:

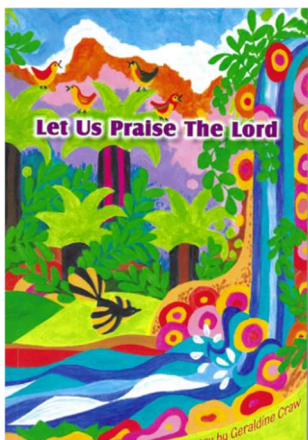
[editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)

# Camp Fire

Poem by Geraldine Crow

From Geraldine's poetry book –  
*Let Us Praise the Lord.*

Friends, bleary-eyed  
From various qualities of sleep,  
Gather around warming flames  
And a boiling kettle.  
Sunshine filters through  
The many branches of  
The big old totara tree.  
The light reveals columns of  
smoke  
Rising off the breakfast fire.  
Forming patterns,  
Like the shafts of light  
Streaming through stained glass  
windows  
In a church.  
And I find  
I sit in a place of worship  
In the wilderness.



# Going Home

by Anna Verhaegh

Birdsong hits the air like  
chimes on a blustery  
winter's evening.

Cattle bellow as if a  
brass band tuning.

Tiny creatures scurry to warmth and  
comfort.

Ice crystals form layers of crisp beauty on  
windows and puddles.

Walking along the ditch I see my breath.  
My shadow trailing behind as the sun  
begins to disappear behind thick rolling  
hills.

Sloshing between mud and grass, my  
boots

Become riddled with debris.

Up the rickety path, a warm glow  
welcomes me.



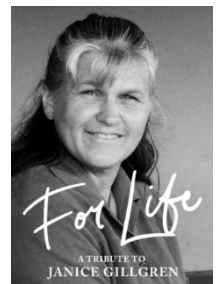
## BOOK LAUNCH – *For Life: a Tribute to Janice Gillgren*

When: 12 February at 2pm

Where: Tikipunga Baptist Church –  
Corner of Kiripaka and Heretaunga St,  
Whangarei

Come along and  
celebrate the life of  
an amazing woman  
that so many of us  
held dear. ♥

Copies will be  
available for \$25  
each.



# Tips From an Editor

## Changes that will help your file look more polished:

by Janette Busch

- To move to a new page – instead of pressing enter multiple times press Control+Enter (hold down Ctrl (control) key and, at the same time, press Enter).
- At the top of the screen (in the ribbon) is this symbol ¶ (called a pilcrow). It shows that you have pressed enter to go to the next line instead of allowing the program to move there automatically. Always allow the program to choose the end of the line of text – don't press enter.
- To remove double spaces between words (especially after a full stop) – Home/Find/press the Space Bar twice/go to Replace (in the ribbon) press the Space Bar once, then Choose Replace/Next. Don't be tempted to click on Replace All as that can result in some unexpected changes.
- In Paragraph/Line and Page Breaks check Don't hyphenate and don't check Widow and Orphan Control (this avoids having a single word(s)/line of text at the top or bottom of a page).
- Headings/caption styles – there are three common styles of capitals for headings: capital case (all letters are in capital letters); sentence case (only the first word in the sentence has a capital letter while proper nouns always begin with a capital letter); and title case (all major words are capitalised and all minor words are in lower case).
  - Major words are nouns, verbs (including linking verbs), adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and all words of four letters or more. Minor words are short (i.e., three letters or fewer) conjunctions, short prepositions, and all articles (the, a and an). *WORD in its more recent updates has decided that all words in title case will begin with a capital letter but this is incorrect according to popular style guides.*
- Captions and titles do not have a full stop at the end; they are not in a sentence form.
- Section Breaks – use a Section Break (Layout/Page Breaks/Section Breaks/Next Page to separate the preliminary pages from the main body of the manuscript; then unlink the page number from the previous pages). Set the page numbers for preliminary pages (Front Matter) in a different style, e.g. i, ii, iii, iv etc
- Change the margins to Mirror Margins if printing the text on both sides of the paper (double sided) – Page Layout/Margins/Mirrored then make the inner margin larger than the outer margin to allow for binding. When using Mirror Margins ensure that the first (right-hand) page of the main body of the document starts with an odd number (you may need to insert a blank page to achieve this).

# Join a Writers Group

## AUCKLAND, ELLERSLIE

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

## AUCKLAND NORTH SHORE

Ted Woudberg  
Mob: (021) 0270 3011  
[tedw.hbc@gmail.com](mailto:tedw.hbc@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

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

## NELSON

Kay Peterson  
(027)-547-6777  
[kaypeterson4@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kaypeterson4@xtra.co.nz)

## 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  
[pauldevereux@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pauldevereux@xtra.co.nz)

# W E L C O M E

## New and Returning Members:

### Amy Duffy

Taupo

### Karen Heslop

Nelson

### Barbara Halliday

Auckland South

### Katherine

**Forster**

Raetihi

### Barry Bryan

Auckland

### Kim Procter

Paraparaumu

### Chantel Strooh

Auckland West

### Rachel Batten

New Plymouth

### Cindy Holden

Rolleston

### Rose Muir

Auckland North

### Darien Cunliffe

Tauranga

### Dianne McClay

Hamilton

### Jill Brookes

Lower Hutt

### Joy Ward

Papakura

**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 here:**

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





*Photo montage – Fantail by Max Carr*

## Writing Competitions Points Board

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Robyn Wylie	15	Taylor Foster	15	Ruth Jamieson	15
Rachel Larkin	12	Fiona Murray	12	Lois Farrow	12
Chantel Strooh	9	Jill Clarke	9	Pam Driver	9
		Felicity Logan	9	Kathryn Paul	9

Our apologies for an oversight which meant in our previous issue we didn't list all those who have been promoted to a new level. Congratulations to Pam Driver, Susan Flanagan and Eion Field who have now moved up another level.

A reminder that Level Three competition prizes are now awarded two times per year.

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, those with the highest points in Levels One, Two and Three will be awarded monetary prizes for first, second and third. Prizes up for grabs are: **\$60 for First Place, \$50 for Second Place, \$40 for Third place**. These are awarded as Manna Christian Store e-vouchers via email. Our next prize winners will be published in the Jun-Jul 2023 magazine edition.

All new members begin by 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. All entrants receive helpful constructive feedback via email from the judges.

# Competition Results

## Level One

**Judge: Debbie McDermott**

**Requirement:** Write a fictional short story that is full of suspense or the unexpected and has a strong Christian takeaway message. Use the following 10 words at least once in your tale: hoot, bush, beam, shadows, pants, creak, wind, hair, stand, swing. (500 words)

### General Comments

*I was pleased to receive eight entries to this competition—particularly at this time of year when most of us are extremely busy with Christmas and New Year festivities and have a 1 January deadline to meet! It was also nice to get entries from five first-time entrants, three of whom are new members. Welcome! I hope you have a long and happy association with New Zealand Christian Writers.*

*All entrants made a great effort in tackling the topic, but some lost valuable points due to grammar and punctuation mistakes that may have been avoided had their entries been thoroughly checked before they were submitted.*

*Two of the eight entrants sadly lost additional points because they had not included one of the 10 stipulated words in their entry. Using all 10 of the words at least once in their stories was a key requirement of the competition so it was vital to ensure none of these words were overlooked. To avoid making such an error, it is useful to use Word's Navigation search box (Ctrl+F) when proofreading your story.*

*Meeting competition requirements is important because they comprise up to 40% of your marks. Firstly, there are the general layout and formatting requirements that are worth 15%. These are listed at the top of the last page of the magazine and on the competition reference sheet (available on the NZCW website) as follows:*

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

**Paragraph Spacing:** 6 pt **Indentation:** None **Alignment:** Justified

*Secondly, there are specific requirements that are worth 25%. For this competition, the story had to be full of suspense or the unexpected, have a strong Christian takeaway message, and contain 10 specified words at least once.*

*Congratulations to Robyn Wylie, Rachel Larkin and Chantel Strooh for writing so well, meeting all the key requirements, and earning yourselves a first, second and third place as a result.*

# First Place



Robyn  
Wylie  
of Tauranga

## Morning Walk

I dived out of bed eager to start the new day. Donning my walking pants and tee-shirt, I decided to grab a sweatshirt. Despite being summer these early mornings were still chilly.

Stepping outside I felt the fresh air cool on my face. I crossed the road to the playground where a swing sat idle and dew was still heavy on the grass. Taking the path up the hill towards Maungawhau I thanked God for this beautiful mountain just across the road from my apartment.

I breathe deeply and stride out. The road winds steeply upwards. I hear a creak as a twig snaps and a runner jogs past me, his breath misty in the coolness. Shadows fall across the path and the road is damp beneath my feet. Higher and higher I go, drinking in the beauty surrounding me. Through a gap in the trees, I can see right out to Rangitoto Island. I stand still gazing out to the harbour dotted with tiny white boats, specks in the distance. Strong wings beat the air as a tui whizzes past me. I am alone, caught up in the beauty of all that God has created.

Walking around the next bend, I am aware of someone coming up behind me. The footsteps are heavy and coming closer. I jump at the hoot of an owl and pick up my pace trying not to appear frightened. The hair on my forearms is standing on end and my skin is clammy with fear. I silently repeat the armour of God seeking his protection, aware that I am alone on this mountain pathway. The wind picks up and leaves are rustling around me. Digging my fingernails into my palms I check their length to decide whether they can inflict any damage. I pray that someone will come along the path towards me as I question my wisdom at coming up here so early.

I round another corner and the path stretches out in front of me, empty. The footsteps are coming closer. My heart beats rapidly inside my chest. A thick grove of native trees grows along the bank to my left, behind a wooden railing. A gap appears in the railing revealing a rough path sloping downwards. I walk briskly past the gap, trying to maintain a steady pace and not show any fear. A small break in the trees allows a beam of light to shine through. Shadows flicker as sunshine filters through the native bush. Around the corner, a couple walk towards me. I am not alone!

Pressing forward I listen. What is that? No sound. A quick glance behind reveals an empty path. Relief surges through me as I realise nobody is following me. They must have taken the rough path down the hill. I breathe a prayer of thanks and think of Jesus saying to his disciples in Matthew 8:26 “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?”

Psalm 121:7-8 tells us:

The Lord will keep you from all harm – he will watch over your life;

the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

## Second Place



Rachel  
Larkin  
of Auckland

### The Invitation

---

The shadows were lengthening, and I knew I was running out of time before night settled in. The ladies assured me it would be easy to find although they probably weren't thinking I would be arriving at this hour.

“Just follow the path and cross the swing bridge and you are basically there,” Tracy had directed me.

Hogwash, there is no swing bridge or at least I can't find it. The track wasn't wide enough for vehicles, so I had left my trusty Ford Escort at the gate and was making my way through the bush to the hidden retreat centre.

I wasn't keen on leaving my cosy home to attend a women's weekend getaway, but I was becoming a bit of a recluse lately. So much had happened in the past year, and it seemed easier to go through life on my terms. There were no dramas in my little world, I made sure of that. But the women at church excitedly described their last retreat as a real hoot and they seemed genuine when they invited me.

The wind was picking up and it was difficult to move through the increasingly thick undergrowth. I must have taken the wrong track. Why didn't I accept Tracy's offer to carpool? At least we would be lost together.

“No, Katie, you don't need anyone else. You can do this. Keep calm and carry on!”, I grunted.

I had given up on trying to keep my hair in place. The ladies will just have to accept me the way I am. The sun had set and only tree silhouettes were visible. They looked like enormous waving monsters taunting me. I was beginning to be paranoid with every creak of the branches. Was someone following me or was it just the rustling trees? Rain was now falling making it difficult to see the track. A beam of light zig-zagged across the sky.

“Okay, Katie, this is not cool. Time to run.”

I took off towards what looked like an array of lights in the distance. A thunderclap exploded through the night air. I jumped and started sliding through the gravel. I felt my legs weaken. I put my hands out to soften the fall as I tumbled through the bush.

Screaming, I landed headfirst into a clearing. I looked down at my pants, completely soaked in mud. I looked up to see Tracy racing over a swing bridge,

“Katie! Katie! Are you okay? We have been so worried about you.”

“Yes, I think so.” I shakenly replied.

While Tracy was helping me to stand, another lady wrapped a towel around me. I felt so embarrassed at the way I had arrived. I wanted the ground to swallow me. I was anxious to turn around and find my way back to the car, but the ladies had already bundled me into the retreat centre and were pouring a giant mug of hot chocolate and seemed excited to hear all about my adventure. Maybe this weekend won't be so bad after all.

## Third Place



Chantel  
Strooh  
of Auckland

## Lost

Frankie was lost. Scared and lost. He wandered too far from the trail and was now being surrounded by a wall of darkness. The full moon hesitantly peeked through some of the branches of the forest as the tall trees moved in the wind. He watched a large branch swing from side to side. In the distance, the hoot of an owl sent shivers down his spine. His eyes caught the movement in the shadows before he heard the snap of the twigs.



This made the hair on his neck stand up. A soft growl filled his ears. Frankie slowly backed away, he was not prepared to face whatever creature lurked in the bush.

Frankie's breathing quickened. A pair of glistening eyes watched him through the foliage. A whimper escaped Frankie's lips before he turned around and ran as fast as his legs could move. His heart hammered in his ears. The air escaped his lungs in short, sharp pants. He came to a sudden stop as he watched the ground disappear and get swallowed up by the river underneath. He was trapped. He frantically looked around, trying to find somewhere to cross the fast flowing river. It was a long way down.

Frankie knew that the creature wouldn't be far behind, he could hear the rustling in the leaves as far as he ran. There had to be a way across. He started pacing up and down the bank, looking for a way to cross. A way to safety. A bird suddenly flew up from where it was perched behind him. Frankie jumped in fright. Then that soft growl again. Fuelled by panic and urgency, he scanned the bank again. There! A beam of moonlight cascading through the trees fell onto a log. It stretched from one side of the river to the other. Frankie ran closer. The moss covered log was narrow and slippery from the recent rain.

He froze. He was too scared to move. His legs were shaking. Tilly, his best friend, always said that anyone can be brave because God gives them strength. Right now, Frankie needed to be brave. Frankie crouched down and slowly climbed onto the log. There was a loud creak and he stopped. Maybe he was too heavy. Maybe he would fall. Maybe...maybe he could do this. He needed to try. He slowly inched forward. He was cold and wet and afraid but he kept moving.

Frankie jumped from the log onto the soft ground. He made it. A smile beamed across his face. Tilly would be so proud of him right now. He started walking towards a clearing but suddenly stopped. He could hear voices. Voices calling his name. He started running through the forest and bounced with happiness when he saw familiar faces.

"Frankie! You're safe!" Tilly ran to him and threw her arms around her best friend, eyes filled with tears.

"I kept praying and asking God to protect you and bring you home safely." Tilly said as she patted him on the head.

"You are such a good dog, Frankie. Let's go home."

Frankie was happy. Happy, safe and home.

# Level Two

Judge: Cindy David

**Requirement:** Apart from threatening our health, the Covid-19 pandemic has precipitated a global economic crisis that closed down many businesses and caused people to lose their jobs. Write a short devotion that will bring encouragement to your readers, especially those who have been affected by the pandemic. Begin with an anecdote. (300 words)

## General Comments

*Devotionals serve as powerful tools for spiritual growth and encouragement. Millions turn to them everyday. I always find that the best devotions incorporate four elements:*

1. Hook
2. Book
3. Look
4. Took

**Hook** is a compelling anecdote that grabs our attention. A compelling anecdote is one that relates to the reader's current situation or struggle.

**Book** points us to the wisdom of the Bible.

**Look** is when we relate the biblical principle with the reader's needs.

**Took** is the takeaway value, or the central point which is usually presented at the end of the devotional article.

*I was delighted to receive four entries, all well-written and a source of encouragement for the readers.*

*I have awarded the first place to Taylor Foster. Taylor has written a powerful reminder of who God is in the midst of all that's happening around us. She started with an anecdote—depicting a scene that relates well with the reader's current situation. She's able to relate with what the readers are possibly feeling or asking, "Where is God in all this?" Later on she gives them some answers by pointing them to a Scripture verse..*

*I've awarded the second place to Fiona Murray. If not for the errors made on formatting and spacing, her devotional article would have earned first place equal. Her sharing a personal struggle during the Covid-19 event is a very effective way to begin a devotion. Knowing that we are not alone in these difficult times and that someone understands what we are going through are the very elements that make a devotional so engaging and inspiring..*

*Third place equal goes to Felicity Logan and Jill Clarke.*

# First Place



Taylor  
Foster  
of  
Tauranga

## Our Calling

---

I will never forget the day I drove down our town's main street and only my family and I were on the road. Shop doors were locked up, lights were off and 'Until Further Notice' signs were plastered on each window. Little did I know that this COVID-19 lockdown would cause job losses and some businesses to be locked up for good.

During these times, confusion and uncertainty are common feelings. We can sit and wonder, "Where is God in all of this?" For some, opening a business or getting a certain job may have felt like the area where God had called you — only to have nearly three years where that calling was interrupted. But was it really an interruption? Were those lockdowns and changes too much for God and His plan for your life?

In Isaiah 55:9 (NLT, paraphrased), God declares, 'My ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.' Perhaps God sees this season differently. When we see a failed dream, He sees another path or a different story. In those days of isolation, it may have been our special time for growing closer to Him.

God doesn't abandon His children when the going gets tough. He knows what He is doing and what is best for us. "He will make everything work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." (Romans 8:28, NLT, paraphrased)

As children of God, we are the ones who are called. This means He has a plan and will see it through to completion. Sometimes we feel that our God-called journey has been halted, like during the COVID-19 pandemic. But what if this COVID event was not an interruption to our calling at all, but instead, in God's eyes, it **was** our calling?

## Second Place



Fiona  
Murray  
of Lincoln,  
Selwyn  
District,  
Canterbury

### Genesis 16:13 You are the God who sees me

---

I stared at the photos on Facebook. Photos of friends smiling and enjoying a coffee together. They had met in a café in Blenheim. As I looked at the photo, the impact of a long lockdown took hold of me. My eyes blurred with tears and sadness washed over me. A torrent of emotions exploded. I cried. I really cried. What was happening here in Auckland simply became too much to bear. I sat there on the edge of my bed, holding my phone, wishing it was all over.

I felt a tiny arm reach around my body. Then came the small voice of reassurance.

“Mummy, it will be OK. It will be OK.”

My then seven-year-old son had found his mother very upset. Without hesitation, he reached out and brought comfort. His compassion for someone hurt and confused carried love and healing in a moment of need.

Lockdown was difficult for many of us. The pandemic brought unbearable times of isolation and loneliness for people. God created us for relationships. Yet here we were, stuck in our homes, unable to meet with friends and family.

And, still today, we are dealing with withdrawal. The anxiety of re-entering society is great. Loneliness has never been greater.

Yet we are not alone.

Listen for that still, small voice of reassurance. That voice that tells you it will be OK. He is placing his arms around us. He is our place of strength.

God is with us.

This year, He has reminded me of His continual presence. In Genesis 16, we reflect on Hagar, alone and seemingly abandoned. She meets with God as the one who sees her.

El Roi is Hebrew for ‘the God who sees me.’

We are not forgotten. We are never alone.

# Third Place Equal



Felicity  
Logan  
of Feilding

## Aftermath

“Welcome, daughter!” said the Lord after his return. “Why so surprised and uncertain? You knew this Day would come.”

“Oh, but... so soon, not this way!” she answered flustered. “I just... continued as normal!”

“It’s now the Kingdom normal,” responded the Lord, his face turning to the next person.

“Son, you knew how close, so you were to be a watchman. Who did you warn and win?” But the young man bowed his head, ashamed of his fear to antagonize or appear unfeeling.

Be assured, faith in Christ ushered us into God’s forever kingdom. Busyness and fear won’t destroy our destiny, but what of those who needed to hear our testimonies?

Since 2020 we lost holiday plans, family interactions, businesses, careers and schooling. Instead came illness, bereavement, loneliness, blaming, supply disruptions, conflicting news, a heavy-handed government, fears for the future. Friendships suffered because of differing viewpoints. Children feel they must save the world. All bad!

“Aftermath” doesn’t mean it’s over. Jesus warned, and God’s prophets spoke. Those old obscure prophecies now appear feasible (wheels within wheels – space technology? Beasts of mixed breed – biological modification? The supernatural dimension is augmented by scientists at CERN, paganism’s upsurge, and attempts to merge Christianity with other faiths, replacing our God Yahweh. Had we lived in 30AD we too may have labelled Jesus as “yet another Messiah pretender”.

Acceptance of Jesus as Messiah ushered us into God’s kingdom, regardless of resulting trials. Our God transcends all that: what he purposed he will bring about, despite floods, famine, earthquakes and pestilence. He is still the Truth even when ideologies confuse good and evil, and churches lapse into compromise.

All these things must precede Jesus’ return. You and I are secure in his heavenly solution, trusting our Heavenly Father – but encouraging whoever we can into salvation.



## Third Place Equal



Jill  
Clarke  
of Wanganui

## Christ Offers Victory in Desperation 2 Kings 4:1-7

“Whose turn is it to say grace?” asked Father as the family sat around the dinner table. The 3-year-old responded, “None of the kids, thank you for our dinner. Amen.”

In the story of Elisha and the desperate widow, we see how neighbours and friends became part of a miracle by giving what they had. Christians cannot avoid the troubles of this world. Making our needs known is not easy for us.

Elisha was God’s man. Here is a reminder for us to go to God first with all our needs. He will direct our paths and provide what is best for us, often using others to assist. Elisha was not avoiding the situation when he referred the widow to those closest to her. His God-given discernment allowed him to see the whole truth.

Elisha had listened when the widow told her story. He avoided asking “What do you need?” asking instead, “What do you have?” He instructed the widow and sons to ask for empty jars, not money or food, which were her greatest needs. Only empty jars. By putting her faith into action, neighbours and friends would become part of the miracle that would fulfil all her needs.

Jars procured. Elisha’s instructions obeyed. The oil flowed until all jars were full.

Our obedience to God will be the oil of His love, peace and joy filling our lives as we lock ourselves into God’s love through our commitment to Jesus, reading His word and seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit while acting in faith.

Then we can pay our debts of gratitude to God for His provision, the wisdom of other Christians, and do our part in helping make the miracles happen through faith.

## Level Three

**Judge: Julia Martin**

**Requirement:** Imagine you have a bucket list of things you would like to do or places you’d like to visit. Identify one and explain why it’s on your list. (300 words maximum)

## General Comments

*Most of us have hopes and dreams of doing things and visiting places within our lifetime—or to put it more bluntly—before we ‘kick the bucket!’*

*The Bucket List was made popular by the 2007 film of the same name starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. Both terminally ill, the diverse pair decided to draw up a list of things they’d like to do before their time is finally up. While their situation is grim, some of their exploits are hilariously funny.*

*I chose this straightforward topic for the busy time of the year and was delighted to receive nine excellent entries, including three from newly promoted members to level three. The assignment gave members the opportunity to handle the topic any way they fancied—either secular or Christian, serious, light-hearted, or a combination.*

*The majority of entrants chose to write about serious places or events they’d like to visit or take part in. Most of these were interesting and well backed up by reasons for their choice. I was however looking for a touch of humour and an experience that ‘sparkled’. It could be described as an X factor that editors look for when appraising scripts.*

*Ruth Jamieson came the closest and so I awarded her first place for her dream of a cruise around exotic places. Second place goes to Lois Farrow for her magnanimous ambition to help needy people by giving away huge amounts of money which she currently doesn’t possess.*

*I had difficulty in separating entries for third place, so awarded third place equal to Pam Driver and Kathryn Paul for their dream destinations and the reasons for their choice.*

*The standard of writing was generally good apart from a few punctuation slips. There was little separating most of the entries so I encourage you all to keep entering the competitions as you are able, as you are all capable of winning a placing.*

## First Place



Ruth  
Jamieson  
of Whakatane

### Dreams are Free

---

*“Enjoy 10 days relaxing on board the Pacific Explorer. You’ll soon discover delicious food, fun activities, a wide choice of entertainment, amazing destinations...”*

Normally I would tune out advertisements, but today my imaginative mind was set in motion; drifting on the open seas, inhaling the salt-laden air, feeling the cool breeze while sunbathing on deck, watching the sunrise and sunsets, soaking in the large pool, no meals to prepare...

The day had been full, the family feed, the dishes washed and put away. I paused to catch the last of the advert. *“The choice is yours—you can do it all or you can do nothing at all.”*

It sounded fabulous, but could we afford it? Well, ‘at least dreams are free,’ I thought.

Methodically I continued to work, my mind elsewhere cruising around the Islands—tropical fruits, clear waters, warm days, long relaxing evenings, a chance to wear those special mother-in-law dresses that take up space in my wardrobe—better check that they still fit. A crash diet maybe, or should that wait until after the trip?

Maybe I should do an internet search to check out the options—and check the bank account at the same time, before talking with hubby.

*“A cruise ship is stranded at sea with an outbreak of the potentially dangerous Covid 19 virus.”* That news item cut deep into my dreams. Stuck on board a ship quarantined in a small windowless cabin for days or weeks, no fresh air, no activities. I don’t get seasick but I think I would experience a phobia of some sort.

Sometimes dreams can be rekindled, like now three years on. The cruise ships are sailing again. No more imagining. My practical mind takes over.

## Second Place



Lois  
Farrow  
of Rangiora

## Dreams are Free

Dreams are free, but fulfilling them can be costly. My dream is to have loads of money to give away, and I mean lots of money. Amounts beyond my ability to earn, or even imagine.

Seeing the amazing work done by many mission agencies, both near and far, as well as local charities working hard in my community, I would love to be able to provide generously for the needs I see.

I would give to lesser-known folks who minister to the desperately poor, and those who work quietly in their communities to make life better for under-resourced people. Organisations who struggle for money. My list is a long one.

So, should I buy a lotto ticket? That is not likely to be successful. Should I write to some mega-rich folks and ask them to share their wealth with me? They don’t even know me, so that wouldn’t be well received. Mr. Bezos says he wants to give his vast fortune away, but he doesn’t know the people I know, so perhaps I could help him to distribute his fortune.

But God knows. My God owns the whole world, he knows where the wealth is, and how to direct it to where it should be. He already supplies his people from his riches in glory.

God also knows true wealth, which is his people who give of themselves, and give from their resources as they are able. Often this is from the little they have, which adds up to much. God can add and multiply far better than I can.

So, my question has to be not what would I do if I had a lot, but what am I doing with what I have? I can't take it with me when I die, but I can use it now.

## Third Place Equal



Pam  
Driver  
of Auckland  
South

## Beyond the Bucket

I don't keep a bucket list. I'm a list ticker and once an item makes it onto any list of mine then it must be accomplished. A tick mark must be applied. Having a bucket list would only create emotional havoc for an incurable ticker of lists such as I.

However, should I take this intimidating step, near the top would be the Creation Museum in Kentucky, USA. The biblical foundation of and evidence for God's creation seized my attention from an early age. I clearly remember being introduced to what used to be called 'micro' versus 'macro' evolution when I was around nine years old. It made sense to my young yet logical brain. I continue to feel profound thanks to that church teacher whose name and face are long forgotten, but whose message lives on in my heart.

From that time on, I became a keen student of the creation/evolution debate. A visit to the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter would be a climax in this ongoing chapter of my life. What a rarity; a museum dedicated solely to the glory of our Creator God, with everything presented from a biblical point of view. As well a huge, full-sized ark to stun and fill me with wonder.

Will I ever make it there? I don't particularly enjoy travel so maybe once a teleporter is invented!

In the end it doesn't really matter. I will have something far better and beyond any earthly bucket list. In heaven I'll spend time with the real Noah and his unnamed missus. Plus, I bet there'll be the most intense virtual reality where I can visit the original ark. Oh, and yes, forget puppies and kittens, I plan on having a T-rex as a pet up there. Now that's a bucket list.

## Third Place Equal



Kathryn  
Paul  
of Northland

### Israel in my Bucket

My bucket list includes travel and a strongly desired destination is Israel. I would love to visit Israel for the most obvious reason—the Bible! I would like to be where Jesus and His disciples walked and connect with the country and culture that I've read so much history about.

I imagine experiencing the reality of the climate, landscapes and people would be educational and enhance my Bible reading comprehension. It wouldn't surprise me if by visiting Israel I end up with a closer connection to the Lord and a better understanding of His passion for Israel.

I'm also keen to share the Gospel there with anyone who the Lord connects me to in a divine appointment. I'd like to discover how much Christianity is spreading. I'd love to meet Christians who live in Israel and encourage them. What a privilege it would be to worship the Lord Jesus Christ in the land of His birth!

Some of the key places from the Bible I'd like to explore are Sea of Galilee, Mediterranean Sea, Dead Sea, Mount Zion, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jordan River and a food market. If I could do a horse trek in Israel, I'd love to do that. To be able to see farms and orchards in the rural areas would be fantastic, as well as experiencing the cities and modern Israel.

I'd like to visit as much of the country and historical landmarks as possible. I've spent much time reading the Bible over the years and I feel the stories will become that much more real to me. I'm betting I will spend many moments in a sense of awe, walking where so many Bible characters have walked. For many years I've been praying a trip like this would happen. In God's timing I believe it will!





# Competitions for April 2023

Due by 1 March 2023

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:** When Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13 NLT), He was not just referring to His crucifixion, He was also reminding His disciples to "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34 NLT). Based on these verses, write a true account of how someone has 'laid down their life' for you or another person in some way; i.e. not necessarily physical death. (400 words)



*Debbie*

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

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

**Requirement:** Research an invention that people thought impossible at the time in history. Then, based on the Scripture, 'With God all things are possible' (Mark 10:27), write about the invention and its inventor (250 words). Now share about something you have achieved for which you initially received opposition (250 words).

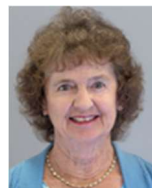


*Lesley*

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

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

**Requirement:** Choose a character involved in the Easter story as recorded in the gospels. From their point of view, explain their involvement, what they experienced, and how it impacted their life. (350 words maximum)



*Julia*

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



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

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